

John North American Baptist
Africa - West
Cameroons



CALL OF THE CAMEROONS



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CALL OF THE CAMEROONS

The First of Two Volumes of the Story of
Missionary Endeavor and Triumph in the
Cameroons of West Africa by the
North American Baptist Gen-
eral Missionary Society



STUDY COURSE NO. I

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C O N T E N T S

Chapter	Page
PREFACE Rev. H. G. Dymmel	4
1. THE BEGINNINGS OF THE CAMEROONS BAPTIST MISSION Dr. M. L. Leuschner	7
2. HIGHLIGHTS OF CAMEROONS HISTORY Rev. and Mrs. George Dunger	25
3. A TREK THROUGH THE CAMEROONS COUNTRY Rev. and Mrs. Edwin Michelson	39
4. ONE MILLION AFRICANS Rev. and Mrs. George Dunger	49
5. LIFE IN AN AFRICAN VILLAGE Rev. and Mrs. George Dunger	63
6. FROM MAGIC TO FAITH Rev. and Mrs. Gilbert Schneider	75
7. MISSIONARY STRATEGY IN THE CAMEROONS Rev. and Mrs. Paul Gebauer	90
8. CHRIST AT THE AFRICAN CROSSROAD Rev. and Mrs. Paul Gebauer	100

P R E F A C E

Truly, this is a thrilling privilege to write the preface to this study book. It is the first of a series which we as North American Baptists are publishing about our beloved mission enterprise in the Cameroons, West Africa. It comes fresh from the frontlines. It meets our constituency's quest for missionary intelligence in exchange for their absorbing devotion to the cause of world-wide missions.

The denominational Committee of Education, created by the constitution of 1946, appointed a subcommittee composed of the Promotional Secretary, Dr. M. L. Leuschner, chairman; Miss Martha Leypoldt, youth research student; the Rev. J. C. Gunst, Youth's General Secretary; and Rev. H. G. Dymmel, General Missionary Secretary, for the purpose of preparing study courses in missions.

This first-fruit of their planning is now before you. It is a goodly issue, — "God's image carved in ebony," — radiant with zest and joy, eloquent about the Lord's holy orders, redolent of distant allure, awed by the momentous task.

The contributors, one and all, are seasoned servants of their mighty Lord and have earned their kudos by dint of plodded pioneering, unremitting toil, triple responsibilities, meticulous attention to detail.

The report on early beginnings of missionary work in the Cameroons rides the crest of Dr. Leuschner's sparkling enthusiasm; three more chapters benefit by School Supervisor Dunger's scrupulous scholarship acquired in self-denying service and research; the vivid account of an African trek stems from the facile pen of genial Missionary Michelson. The chapter, "From Magic to Faith," discloses the sure-footed stride of forearmed Missionary Schneider into the Great Enemy's territory. And in the crisp phrase, the startling flash of matched metaphor of

the last two chapters, the administrative approach of our Missions Superintendent, Paul Gebauer, stands revealed with prophetic insight and spiritual aplomb.

We are also grateful that several of these writers added the intuitive touch of their charming helpmeets, Louise Dunger, Verna Michelson, Mildred Schneider and Clara Gebauer.

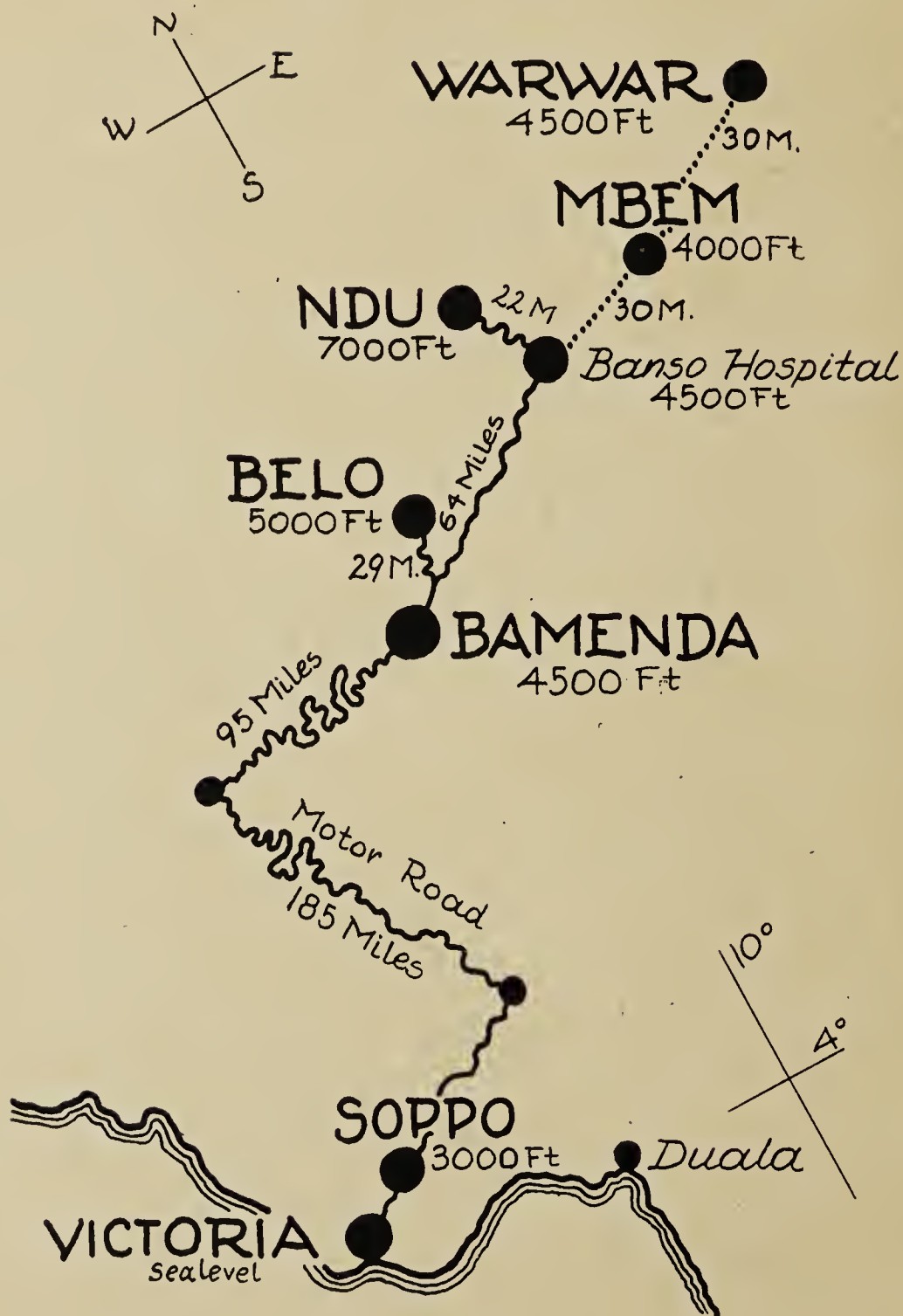
Of course, this first book represents only a small part of what in the long run should be studied about West Africa. Therefore the next book will deal with the specialized activities of our missionaries: evangelism, medical work, mission schools, trekking, native workers, and the total outreach of our missionary enterprise.

Thus, may this book find favor with God and His people and make us increase in wisdom and spiritual stature.

Forest Park, Illinois,
March, 1949

General Missionary Secretary
H. G. DYMMELE,

CAMEROONS BAPTIST MISSION. U.S.A., West Africa



CHAPTER ONE

The Beginnings of the Cameroons Baptist Mission

By Dr. Martin L. Leuschner

The fisherman's paradise has often been the place where the Lord Jesus Christ has let out the net of the Gospel for a great ingathering of souls. It was on the shores of Lake Galilee that Jesus found his first disciples in a group of fishermen who later became the heroic heralds of the Kingdom of God. It was at the seaside while standing in a fisherman's boat that Jesus spoke to a great multitude and taught them many things in parables, so that many believed on him while others took offense at his sayings.

It is no exaggeration to assert that the Cameroons of Africa, which became known as a fishermen's paradise for shrimps, has also become one of God's great mission fields of the world in which the net of the Gospel again and again has brought forth many souls for the eternal Kingdom of our Lord. For more than fifty years, since August Steffens, as a newly graduated student from our Rochester Seminary first went to Africa, there has been a triumphal procession of more than fifty of our young people who have responded to God's bidding and to the call of the Cameroons to serve as missionaries. Their story will be the stirring message of this book.

ALFRED SAKER IN THE CAMEROONS

The name "Cameroon" comes from a Portuguese word meaning "shrimp" or "prawn" and refers to the fact that the river bearing that name supplied the natives with this delicacy. The colony lies in West Africa, north of the equator, forming a strip of territory along the eastern front of Nigeria from

Lake Chad to the Atlantic Ocean and broken near Yola by a gap of about forty miles. The total area is 34,081 square miles, according to the official British report. It has a population of approximately one million natives. The section south of the Yola gap, in which our mission fields are located, extends some 420 miles inland from the coast.

The Cameroons area and history have been colorfully described by Harry R. Rudin in his book, "Germans in the Cameroons," from which several of the following paragraphs have been quoted.

"The first English settlement of a permanent sort was started in 1845 by a Baptist missionary near Duala on the Cameroons River. Later they made a second settlement, Victoria, on the coast west of the river, near a native village called Bimbia. The founder was the Baptist missionary from London, England, named Alfred Saker. Assisted by Christian Negroes from Jamaica, he had labored on the Spanish Island of Fernando Po among the unfortunate blacks who had been freed from slavery on the mainland by English gunboats and sent to this island of refuge. Spanish Jesuits, who came to the island in 1858, were horrified at the presence of the heretical Protestant missionaries and persuaded the governor to order their expulsion.

"Saker was forced by this pressure to ship his little flock to the mainland where, opposite Fernando Po, he purchased from the native King of Bimbia a strip of territory on the coast, ten miles long and five miles deep according to the missionaries, along Ambas Bay at the foot of Mt. Cameroons. The land was cleared of jungle and Victoria was founded. For this Christian community of exiles from Fernando Po Saker worked out a scheme of government, because the English government itself could not be persuaded at this time to annex the territory and establish its rule there.

The 'de facto' governor of the little colony of Victoria was the missionary in charge, aided by a Court of Justice that enforced the law by the imposition of fine and the application of the whip.

"No little attention was drawn to this part of the west coast by the activity of English explorers. In 1862, with Saker as companion, the English traveler Captain Burton climbed Mt. Cameroons to its height of almost 14,000 feet. Full of praise for the region, he told authorities in London that the slopes of the mountain were suitable for a sanatorium and that Ambas Bay offered an excellent harbor. In the 1870's other travelers made like reports regarding the mountain and the bay at its foot.

"But none of these English interests — humanitarian, commercial, missionary, or exploring — could persuade an indifferent government to establish a protectorate or other control over the region. The only authority exercised by the British government in this part of Africa was through a consul assisted by gunboats controlling the waters near by. The very name 'consul' showed that the English regarded the territory as foreign soil. To this consul about once a year the missionary in control of Victoria had to report and to show the records that he kept of the activity of the local court."

A POLITICAL CRISIS COMES TO A HEAD

"In the late 1870's the feeling was growing among English traders that a more effective outside control over the region of the Cameroons River was necessary. Increased economical rivalry among the traders along the west coast resulted as new markets were sought for goods that Europeans produced but could not consume at home. Although only a few German traders were engaged in this trade, their loyal cooperation with the British as well as their acceptance of the measure of British control gave English traders no reason for fearing the Germans. Englishmen were more fearful of

the French, who were moving along the coast toward the Cameroons from the west and the south, establishing factories, claiming territories, and introducing tariffs so high and so discriminatory as to result in the virtual exclusion of all non-French goods. Thus the fear of French traders along the coast and the realization that peace on the Cameroons River could not long be maintained, led to a conviction that European control was necessary if peace were to be kept and trade were to prosper."

But there was a very real division of opinion within the British Government over policies to be pursued. The British Colonial Office was hesitant. Lord Kimberley, Secretary of India but Colonial Secretary until 1882, was strongly opposed to the annexation of the Cameroons, seeing no good whatsoever in these regions. Consul Hewitt, the British representative in the Gulf of Guinea at the time, favored annexation. He believed that this area could be made into "a protectorate or a colony or given to a chartered company of British merchants." Finally, secret instructions were given to Consul Hewitt in June 1882, ordering him to make a lengthy stay on the coast, to visit the Cameroons River, to report on the "kings," the people, the trade of the territory so that the home government might be in a position to give the question more consideration.

But Hewitt was not very successful in his dealings with the natives. Reports of German and French activity along the coast near Lagos made further haste necessary. On April 11, 1884 the British Admiralty ordered ships to be placed at the disposal of Hewitt to assist him in the work of negotiating treaties and setting up English authority on the west coast. While Hewitt on July 6, 1884 was working out details for putting his secret scheme into operation, the big news broke that a German gunboat, "the Moewe," was on its way to the Cameroons River.

Chancellor Bismarck's decision to acquire colonies for Germany was quite unexpected. For some time the German people had become interested in colonies. Other influences had been brought to bear upon the German chancellor to mould his decision and thus to appoint Gustav Nachtigall as his imperial commissioner in West Africa. He was authorized to make treaties with the native "kings" at Duala with instructions that the "Moewe" was to hoist the German flag in Biafra Bay because of the necessity of defending German trade against the English.

It was on Monday, July 14, 1884, that the official occupation of the Cameroons by Germany took place with the formal raising of the German flag and the firing of salutes in Duala and neighboring towns. In this fashion Nachtigall announced to the natives and to the world that Germany accepted the treaties made by German traders and proclaimed her authority in the new lands. And so German rule over the Cameroons was an accomplished fact when Consul Hewitt arrived on July 19, 1884. He might have arrived a day or two earlier had he not stopped on his way in Victoria to proclaim officially that this missionary colony was henceforth a British possession. As a result Hewitt has gone down in history as "Too Late Hewitt."

A number of troublesome years of difficult negotiations with the natives and the British and French Colonial Government followed. There were uprisings that had to be quelled and damage suits that had to be satisfied besides the legal snarls that had to be unraveled. But the political occupation of the Cameroons by the Germans became a definite fact and the Cameroons were henceforth known to the outside world as Kamerun.

STEFFENS' INTEREST IN AFRICA

Naturally, the interest of the Baptists of Germany was directed to Africa during these years

of colonial turmoil. But this interest could not be crystallized into definite and concerted action. The British Baptist Missionary Society endeavored to persuade the Baptists of Germany to take over the Cameroons mission fields, but their efforts were in vain. The chief arguments against the proposal by Baptist leaders of Germany were: "It will cost too much, and the climate is too deadly." After several years the Basel Mission Society finally took over the Baptist work at Victoria.

The Rev. Charles F. Zummach, in doing considerable research work on the life of August Steffens for a biographical article that appeared in the BAPTIST HERALD in its issue of March 15, 1941 has this to say about the consequences: "It was soon discovered that it was possible to transfer physical property, even political allegiance, from one nation to another, but spiritual allegiance was an entirely different matter. Large numbers of the native Baptists of the Cameroons remained loyal to the New Testament principles, which they had been taught. Trying days followed. Many became indifferent; some reverted to heathenism. News of the conditions began to be discussed among Baptists both in Europe and America. They made a profound impression upon young Steffens. It was this which apparently determined him to go to the Cameroons."

It is remarkable that by the Fall of 1890, only six years after the occupation of the Cameroons by Germany as a colony, August Steffens was writing to Mr. Eduard Scheve in Berlin, Germany who was trying to arouse missionary interest in Africa, both in the United States and Germany. His letter follows:

"For some time I have had it in my heart to write to you. From the 'Wahrheitszeuge' I gather that you have a warm interest for missions. Ever since I read of the 'Moewe' bombarding the villages of those poor people, I have felt that I wanted to work among them. Now that Ger-

many has taken over the Cameroons I have prayed that the German Baptists might take over the work among these people. I have admired the staunchness of those native Christians during trying times. More and more the conviction has grown upon me that I should go there as a missionary. I have therefore decided to go, if God will open the way."

The missionary spirit was working like a fire in the soul of this young man. Ten years before in 1880, he and his family had emigrated to America from Germany and had settled down in Trenton, Illinois. Since there was no organized Baptist work in that small community, August Steffens gathered a group of boys and taught a Sunday School class in the Methodist Church. He also conducted Sunday School in surrounding school houses. He wrote into his diary at that time: "My heart yearns to do something for Jesus and to win souls for him." He helped to organize the Baptist Mission at Trenton. In 1886 he went to Rochester, N. Y., to enroll as a student in the Seminary. In the summer of 1887 he was active in colportage work for the American Baptist Publication Society. He was always zealous for the Lord Jesus Christ. God had called him to this neglected field in Africa.

Early in 1891 Professor Walter Rauschenbusch wrote to his brethren in Germany as follows: "There is a young man in our seminary who will graduate next Spring and he is anxious to become a foreign missionary. He is a devout Christian, has a fine personality and, above all, is active in Christian work. He is possessed of a desire to go to the Cameroons. I urge upon you brethren to give this matter serious consideration."

As a result of this letter and the application of August Steffens the Mission Committee in Berlin, Germany, decided on March 27, 1891, to appoint August Steffens as the first American Baptist missionary to the Cameroons. He was graduated from

our Seminary in a class of eight promising students in May 1891 and went to Germany soon thereafter to prepare himself for the trip to Africa.

But the Baptist churches of Germany still largely refused to make any substantial contributions for the Cameroons. There was grave questioning on the part of many about the wisdom of undertaking an independent foreign mission work in Africa. But the Baptist General Conference in Hamburg, Germany in August 1891 endorsed the project and commended it to the churches. In spite of that, it was still a long time before all opposition had vanished.

THE PIONEER WORK OF EARLY MISSIONARIES

On December 8, 1891 August Steffens with his young bride, the former Anna Cappell of Mt. Auburn, New York, arrived in Africa. In his first letter home he wrote: "The task is overwhelming, but Anna and I are happy in it." Conditions on the field were deplorable. For the first four months the Steffens shared a native hut with a native teacher's family, a goat, some pigs and a flock of chickens. From his relatives in Trenton, Illinois he begged \$1000 with which to build a mission house, which he willed to the Mission on his death-bed.

The Rev. Charles F. Zummach has colorfully described the pioneer ministry of this missionary: "The sick had to be cared for, instructions had to be given to new converts, discipline restored among the churches, new stations and schools opened up, and missionary tours undertaken to survey the condition and the extent of the field. They took eight native boys into their home, whom they clothed and fed at their own expense out of their meager salary of \$600 per year. One marvels at the prodigious amount of work that Steffens accomplished in only eighteen months. So quickly did he master the native language that before his death he not only was able to preach without an

interpreter but he translated a number of hymns into the Duala language, twenty-eight of which are still in use in their hymnal today. During his first year there were 376 baptisms, and at the time of his death over 600 new converts had been added to the church.

"Humanly speaking, there could be only one result of such strenuous labors under such adverse conditions — a physical breakdown! Repeated attacks of fever had begun to sap his strength. His last letters voiced the fear that he might not live long. Like a candle that is consumed as it gives off its light, so he literally consumed himself for Christ in the Cameroons. On June 28, 1893 he suffered another attack of the dreaded African fever. At first there appeared to be little danger, but in a few days his illness took a sudden turn for the worse. On the evening of July 3rd he said to his wife, 'Anna, I believe the crisis will come tonight. I feel very weak.' Shortly after midnight the Lord called him home."

God moves in a wondrous and mysterious way to carry on his work! Shortly before Steffens' homegoing, a student friend of his of our Rochester Seminary had been led by the Holy Spirit to write the following letter to the Cameroons Mission Secretary in Berlin, Germany: "Ever since my dear friend and schoolmate, August Steffens, went to the Cameroons, I have longed to join him in the work there. I have now definitely made up my mind to go to the Cameroons as a missionary. Will you please present my application to the board in Berlin? Signed, Emil Suevern."

From 1894 to 1911, except for an interim period of two years from 1898 to 1900 when he served as pastor of the Bethany Baptist Church of Oregon, Emil Suevern held the torch of the Gospel high in strenuous missionary service in the Cameroons. After the death of his first wife, Pauline Daniel, Suevern married the widow of August Steffens.

From 1911 until his death on January 15, 1931 he continued to serve the mission enterprise as secretary and treasurer of the Cameroons Missionary Society. On the tombstone over his grave are the words of faith that were so dear to him: "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Philippians 1:21).

The missionary fires were burning brightly in the hearts of other young students at our Seminary in Rochester, N. Y. Several sons of the large Menonite family of the Wedels were studying for the ministry at the Seminary. One of them, Peter Wedel, was a close friend of the two who had gone to Africa. "In the Fall of 1894," as related by a classmate of his, the Rev. Christian Dippel, "Peter Wedel made a trip to South Russia as an evangelist. In Berlin he met the Cameroons Mission director, Mr. Eduard Scheve, and from him he learned a great deal about the dangers, joys and prospects of the Cameroons work. Later, while traveling on a train in Russia, he had a long season of communion with the Lord in which he became convinced that God had called him to the Cameroons."

From 1895 until his untimely death at sea on August 10, 1897 while returning to the United States to seek relief from a tropical disease, Peter Wedel was engaged with every ounce of his being in the work which he loved so dearly. "Hear in heathendom," he wrote, "one has the feeling that one is at the front battleline where every stroke counts double, while at home so much powder is being wasted."

THE MISSIONARY FIRES BURN BRIGHTLY

But this lone star in the missionary firmament was growing brighter. Both in the United States and in Germany the support of the Cameroons field by the Baptist churches was definitely on the increase. The small band of missionary workers was strengthened with the arrival of the Rev. and

Mrs. Benjamin Graf from the United States in 1896. Mr. Graf supervised the building of schools and chapels for which he was especially qualified. But their stay in Africa was brief, and in the summer of 1897 they returned to the United States and Mr. Graf entered the active pastorate in which he distinguished himself and served his Lord gloriously for many years. In 1897 the Rev. and Mrs. Heinrich C. Enns arrived to assist in the school work, but on June 25, 1897 Mr. Enns died of black-water fever. One year later Mrs. Enns followed her husband in death.

In 1899 a bright new star appeared in the firmament of our Cameroons enterprise with the beginning of a missionary ministry of stellar glory on that continent. In the face of personal obstacles and outward discouragements, Carl J. Bender, another graduate of our Rochester Seminary, went to the Duala Mission Station of Africa with the text ringing in his soul: "I shall not die but live and proclaim the works of the Lord."

On the ship from Bremen to Africa there were two young Baptist women from Germany. Miss Dora Karls, a nurse, and Miss Frieda Lutz, a teacher, were among the first from Germany to join the missionary staff in the Cameroons.

The years that followed tested the faith and courage of these pioneer missionaries in the German colony of Kamerun. Missions were established, schools were organized, a crowded evangelistic program was conducted, dialects had to be learned and visitation work carried on. At the same time, every missionary had to be on constant guard concerning his or her personal health.

In 1902 Bender's seminary friend, the Rev. Valentine Wolff, arrived in Africa to labor with unstinting loyalty to Christ in the Cameroons until 1915. Bender went to Germany on furlough in 1903 and in the following year brought his at-

tractive and gifted bride with him, the former Hedwig Kloeber, to labor with him in Africa.

We can only mention some of the names of those missionaries who went to the Cameroons from Germany in the years that followed. They are a formidable group of young Baptists whose zeal was matched by their sacrificial ministry. They were Anna Pahlke, Rev. and Mrs. Otto Flinth, Rev. and Mrs. J. Hofmeister, Dora Karls, Rev. and Mrs. W. Maertens, Emma Steinfeldt, Rev. and Mrs. W. Schuettel, Rev. and Mrs. C. H. Schwarz, Pauline Kessler, Rev. A. Schmidt, Eliza Hauschild, Rev. P. Grenz, Rev. H. Reimer, Rev. O. Fritz, Rev. F. Kapteina, Rev. F. Riechert, Rev. R. Herwig, Rev. Johannes Sieber, Gertrude Kelletat, Dr. and Mrs. R. Laessig, Rev. and Mrs. W. Schirmacher, and Rev. H. Simoleit.

The Cameroons Mission Society of Germany directed the policies and activities of the mission in Africa. Appointments to the field were made by this Baptist group in Germany. North American Baptist churches were happy just to send their young people and financial contributions to the support of this worthy mission field.

The Rev. Herman Kayser was another of the energetic and enthusiastic students from our Rochester Baptist Seminary who cast his lot soon after graduation and ordination in 1910 with the Cameroons mission work. Until World War No. 1 hindered his labors in 1915, he served his Master faithfully on this field.

The pioneer missionary who encountered the greatest dangers and opened the wildest sections of the interior of Africa to the first rays of the Gospel light was the Rev. Adolf Orthner. From 1910 to 1914 and again for several years after 1928 he toured the grassland country and penetrated the dense thickets to reach the unevangelized natives. He was the forerunner of the "grassland" missionaries who have gone into the interior

of the Cameroons, where we are now reaping such abundant spiritual harvests.

The outbreak of the World War in 1914 brought a temporary halt to the missionary ministry of the Rev. Carl J. Bender, but the Cameroons continued to be the first love of his heart. From 1929, when he and his older daughter, Erica, could sail with him back again to the mission field in Africa, until his death on November 11, 1935, he rejoiced in the blessings of God upon his labors at Soppo in the construction of the mission school, the building of the Soppo Baptist Church, now called the Bender Memorial Church, the visitation of outstations and the baptism of converts. The thrilling story of his life has been told with captivating interest by his son-in-law, Dr. Carl H. Henry, in the book "Bender of the Cameroons."*

A NEW CHAPTER IN OUR MISSION WORK

With the appointment of Rev. Paul Gebauer as one of the Cameroons missionaries in 1931, a new chapter in this missionary enterprise was initiated. Gebauer's striking traits of unbounded enthusiasm and energy, his remarkable ability to put himself in the place of others, his eagerness to learn from every situation in life, his passion to win others for Christ soon marked him in Africa and at home as God's man for the hour! His vision of our own mission fields in Africa to be administered by us was realized in the opening of the Kakaland and Mambila areas in the heart of the Cameroons and later in the organizing and incorporation of the Cameroons Baptist Mission (USA).

In 1936 the North American Baptist Missionary Society assumed complete charge of the grassland field of Kaka (now called Mbem) in the Cameroons interior. This neglected area was turned over to us by the Baptist Society from Germany because of their financial inability to carry on aggressive

* This book is now out of print but it is available for loan purposes at our Headquarters Library, Box 6, Forest Park, Illinois.

work on the African continent. Paul Gebauer, with his bride of less than a year, the former Miss Clara Kratt of Portland, Oregon, settled down at Mbem in Kakaland and with God's help laid the foundation for one of our finest and most successful mission stations.

They were joined in 1936 by Miss Edith Koppin of Detroit, Michigan who had served for a number of years on other mission fields in Africa. Her skill as a trained nurse and her eagerness to witness for Christ soon opened many doors of opportunity for her. Later she engaged in pioneer dispensary work in the Mambila area until 1942 when she returned to the United States and brought her missionary ministry in Africa to a close.

Far in the interior of the Cameroons mandate is an area known as Mambila (now called Warwar Field). The light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ had not penetrated this darkness of Africa. Several exploratory trips had been made to this section by Missionary Adolf Orthner and later by Paul Gebauer. With our expansion of interest in the Cameroons and with a greater vision of the work that needed to be done, it was decided to enter this area with the Gospel.

The Rev. and Mrs. George A. Dunger arrived in the Cameroons in 1938 and soon thereafter began their pioneer ministry on this Mambila field at Warwar. It was difficult work at first. The timidity and fearfulness of the natives had to be conquered with Christian love. Miss Edith Koppin joined them on the field as nurse soon after Miss Laura E. Reddig of Cathay, North Dakota had come to the Mbem field in that same momentous year of 1938. The Warwar Mission Station now shows the wondrous power of the Gospel of God and the Christ-like example of Christian missionaries when these are blended together to shine forth into Africa's spiritual darkness!

During the years of World War No. 2 the Baptist missionaries from Germany were interned at Jamaica by the British Government which had taken over the mandate of the Cameroons. That left the other remaining fields orphaned unless they could be staffed temporarily with North American Baptist missionaries. But even this became extremely difficult as our group of missionaries in Africa dwindled to less than a handful. Paul Gebauer had come to the United States on furlough and, unable to return because of the war, had entered the United States Army as a chaplain. It seemed preposterous for us to think in terms of staffing the various fields of the Cameroons with missionaries when every door seemed to be closed and this task seemed to be only a temporary arrangement until the end of the war.

Then God began to reveal the marvels of his grace and guidance. He called young people into his service until a group of nine missionaries could be commissioned for Africa at one time at the inspiring Sunday afternoon session of the General Conference in Milwaukee, Wisconsin on May 12, 1944. He revealed the development in world affairs that made our missionary leadership in the Cameroons a permanent arrangement, so long as we would be faithful in carrying out our responsibilities. He gave prosperity and record breaking harvests to America and, most of all, a sense of Christian stewardship to our Baptist brethren so that the aggressive advance of our missionary program in the Cameroons might be carried out.

OUR MISSIONARY ADVANCE IN AFRICA

That advance is the background of this mission book. In the following pages you will become acquainted with the reorganized fields in the Cameroons which now number seven, and are named Soppo, Victoria, Bamenda, Belo, Ndu, Mbem, and Warwar. You will become better acquainted with our twenty-six missionaries who are now serving

the Lord Jesus Christ under our appointment. Their names will appear from time to time in these pages or at the head of the chapter. They ought to be mentioned frequently in our prayers at home and from our church pulpits.

Best of all, the missionary advance continues as more missionaries are appointed and added to the staff and as greater building tasks are assumed. To acquaint yourself with the needs and responsibilities of the Cameroons mission field is the privilege of every North American Baptist. It ought to lay a heavy burden on your heart and to lay fire to a glowing passion in your soul to take the Gospel through these many missionaries of ours to the million natives of the Cameroons.

Then you will hear, not only the drums of Africa as you become aware of the fearful superstitions and the darkness of the pagan religions, but your ears will also become attuned to the louder drum-like rhythm of the trekking of our Christian missionaries to the villages and natives, trumpeting the good news of the Gospel to them. Only in this way will the kingdoms of the pagan world in Africa become the Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

There is an interesting saying of African folklore to the effect that "in the beginning the Creator created the Drummer, the Hunter and the Smith. First the Drummer, you will notice, a true pointer to the fundamental role of the drum in African life. From time immemorial it has summoned the people to palavers, warned them of the approach of danger, directed them on the battlefield, brought them news from the outside world, preserved their legends and their folklore, beaten a heady rhythm for their dances, mourned at their funerals, and added dignity and solemnity to tribal gatherings and religious ceremonies.

"Every African drum talks, and its language can be reduced to writing by inventing symbols to de-

note high or low notes, and rapid or slow beats. But to understand the language of the drums one must not only be a master of the vernacular but also the possessor of the musical ear. Africans themselves — especially those of European education — often do not understand what the drums are saying.

“The design of the drum varies with the purpose it is intended to serve, but the principles of its construction are largely uniform — a hollowed log with an animal skin (or the ear of an elephant) stretched across the top and held taut by twine or pegs. Frequently the drum is worshiped as a god, since it is believed to contain the spirit of the tree from which it was carved. To propitiate this spirit, offerings are made of palm-wine, fowls or eggs when the tree is felled. Prayer is made that no misfortune may befall the person who cuts down the tree, the person who carves the drum, and the drummer and dancers who enjoy its music.

“In some parts of Africa, the Man-in-the-Moon is held to be the god of all drummers. When the moon is at the full, it is said, one can see him holding his drum-sticks over a drum, and whenever he drops the sticks on the drum, a drummer dies. All manner of charms and talismans may be used to decorate the drum. Often they are human or animal bones (lion or gorilla), but human bones must have belonged to persons of importance, and have been won in battle. Human sacrifices were once offered to the drum god, but dog flesh is now substituted, with fowls, eggs, wine or European drinks.

“The drummer is selected as a child and apprenticed to the art, his apprenticeship lasting several years. When he dies, his soul is believed to inhabit all drums.”

How insistently these pagan drums speak! How loud is the shouting of heathendom that seems to drown out every other message. But above the

noise and din of pagan cries, there is the call of Christ to every Christian to take the Gospel to the far ends of the earth. That is the call of the Cameroons. It is the call of Christ to you that you must hear above the drums of Africa. Then your heart will respond eagerly and joyously to the marching beat of the song, "The Banner of the Cross."

"Over land and sea,
Wherever man may dwell,
Make the glorious tidings known;
Of the crimson banner now the story tell
While the Lord shall claim his own.

"Marching on, marching on,
For Christ count ev'rything but loss!
And to crown him King
We'll toil and sing
Beneath the banner of the Cross!"



QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. How did Baptist missionary work begin in the Cameroons?
2. What were the circumstances that made the Cameroons a German colony?
3. Who was our first missionary in the Cameroons and what did he accomplish?
4. What was the nature of the new chapter in our Cameroons missionary enterprise that was initiated by North American Baptists in 1931?
5. How many missionaries are serving under our appointment in the Cameroons? Can you name five of them?
6. Can you name the seven different mission fields in the Cameroons of Africa where our missionaries are stationed?

CHAPTER TWO

Highlights of Cameroons History

By Missionaries George and Louise Dunger

It is practically impossible for the historian to obtain accurate and consistent information from the inhabitants of the Cameroons. The reason for this is simple and easy to find. The people are not known to have used a written language and, in case that they did have records of their history, they must have been lost or disappeared altogether because of climatic conditions and vermin, such as the termites.

Searching the writings of ancient and medieval chroniclers, it is interesting to find that Hanno mentions a "Chariot of the Gods" in his circumnavigation of Africa and that he saw "at night a land full of fire" in the middle of which was a fire that reached the stars. At day he beheld a very large mountain. It is easy to believe that Hanno, while sailing the Bight of Biafra, saw the Cameroons Mountain in eruption.

Later on—in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries—the Portuguese navigators mapped the coastline. Their books make mention of such rivers as the Rio del Rey ("the King's River") and they mapped features such as the Cross River, the Cameroes River and small islands and capes which can now be identified with considerable certainty. These Portuguese sailors in some cases penetrated up the rivers and noted the location of tribes, recorded tales of tribal wars and charted the watercourses. These recordings were not prompted by scientific motive but by the desire to establish trading posts.

As interesting as these accounts are, the observations made regarding the people whom these sailors met are still more fascinating. Some record that the natives were very dirty people, many of them

going without any covering; others being very cruel, selling their own children and wives to slave traders. Drinking water for the ships was bought by means of beads and other worthless things which to the natives were attractive ornaments. Trade was done by barter.

Commercial articles, for instance, were given for elephants' teeth, some weighing over one hundred pounds. Knives and spears were other means of exchange. It is said that five hundred slaves and one hundred tusks were collected annually. It was in those days that the Mungo River was mentioned first, that the Bota people and the Bakweri people came in contact with the white man to trade and to exchange goods. It should be mentioned here that the Bota and Bakweri people are still inhabiting the areas, generally speaking, which they occupied in those early days.

PROGRESS DURING THE 19TH CENTURY

The first half of the 19th century indicates many changes. The most important ones were: trade; evidence of colonial interests; anti-slave movement; inception of missionary work; agreement between European powers and native chiefs.

Trade: British trading houses which had establishments in the Congo Region began their enterprises in the Cameroons. A Mr. Beecroft started a trading post at Bimbia, situated on the Cameroons mainland.

Colonial Interests: The British Colonel Nichols visited the coast in the "Kuorra". What is now Victoria harbor was surveyed by Captain Allen and Ellis of the Niger Expedition.

Anti-Slave Movement: Wilberforce's efforts in the House of Parliament of England were given practical scope by sending out British men-of-war for the purpose of capturing slave traders.

Missionary Work: During the years of 1843 and 1844 missionaries of the London Missionary So-

ciety landed on the island of Fernando Po. These missionaries were J. Merrick, Alfred Saker, T. Sturgeon, Dr. G. K. Prince and J. Clarke. They arrived from Jamaica, bringing with them liberated slaves who had been trained in manual crafts. These missionaries and their helpers established mission stations on Fernando Po and later went to the mainland—to Duala and Bimbia—where they began work among the inhabitants, reducing the language to writing and translating the Gospels.

Agreements Between European Powers and Native Chiefs: These agreements concerned mainly the abolition of human sacrifice and entering into trade and protection agreements.

It was during those years also that the Moslem Fulanis raided the settlements of many tribes in the interior and drove them southward. These raids were called the “Fulani Wars” and displaced such tribes as the Bali and others.

In 1838 the Cameroons Mountain erupted, and the lava descended on the eastern slopes to about 2,000 feet altitude.

During the second half of the 19th century a commercial treaty was signed between “King Bell”—the Chief of Duala—and a number of trading companies. This treaty established port rights for vessels and an equity court. Further, a treaty was brought about between the inhabitants of the islands of Ambas Bay and the Bimbia Chief who had previously been named the “King of Bimbia” or “King William”.

ALFRED SAKER, MISSIONARY

We shall return to those events that are of interest to the missionary minded. It was in August 1856 that Alfred Saker—aided by other influential people—decided to establish a station at Ambas Bay. It became necessary to carry out this decision when the new governor of Fernando Po, Don Carlo Chacon, with the support of a number of

Jesuits maintained that Roman Catholicism should be the only religion practiced on Fernando Po. In 1858 Alfred Saker left the island together with his faithful church members. They crossed the straits in several canoes. "King William" of Bimbia and the Bakweri people gave sanctuary to the refugees and provided for them a strip of land about twelve miles long and five miles wide, following the coast line of Amba Bay.

Alfred Saker and his followers set to work. They erected a number of houses and a chapel. They made paths and planted gardens. This settlement was called "VICTORIA" by Alfred Saker in honor of the Queen. Soon the settlement grew. It became necessary to make regulations in order to safeguard and to develop orderly community life. Thus Alfred Saker, the faithful and courageous missionary, became law-giver and civil governor. Meanwhile, the rivalry between the Duala chiefs continued and brought about much unrest, "wars" and even bloodshed.

In the following years an occasional slave trader and vessels carrying hundreds of barrels of rum and liquor continued to call at the ports. Victoria, the place of religious and civil liberty, continued to develop. Liquors were forbidden to be landed and put on sale. Although no discord could be noticed outwardly among the missionary staff, there seems to have been considerable disagreement between the younger missionaries and Alfred Saker. Apparently the former complained that their senior missionary spent too much time and effort on manual work and paid only little attention to the spiritual tasks. These younger missionaries wrote to the home board that Alfred Saker engaged too much in such things as brickmaking, masonry, gardening, translating and printing and other "secular" work. It was in 1869 that the home board dispatched S. B. Underhill to investigate the issue. Having made a thorough study of the type

of work done by Alfred Saker and with a keen appreciation of native and missionary setting, Dr. Underhill vindicated Alfred Saker.

THE LATER YEARS OF THE 19TH CENTURY

Other important events during the second half of the 19th century can be described briefly. In 1874 Alfred Saker, together with George Grenfell (a relative of Wilfred Grenfell of Labrador fame) returned to Victoria. The church grew and an English School was established at that time. In 1880 Alfred Saker returned to England. He died towards the end of the year. Livingstone said of Saker's work that it was "the most remarkable on the West Coast".

The people of Victoria asked the British Government for protection. Colonel Hewitt was instructed to make a treaty with the Germans regarding Victoria.

In 1884 the German Government informed the British Government that the German officer Nachtigal was to investigate German trade in the Cameroons. Under this pretext Nachtigal concluded a treaty with the native chiefs in a few weeks' time. The chiefs were eager to enter into a treaty, especially since they had become tired of waiting for the arrival of the British. When the British representative arrived—only a few days after the Germans had effected the treaty—it was too late, for the German flag was flying over Akwa Town (now Duala). However, Colonel Hewitt was successful in placing Victoria under British protection. In spite of British effort and representation, the Germans annexed one territory after the other. The natives of Hickory and Joss towns (parts of Duala) had their villages burned down by the Germans because these natives protested against annexation.

In 1886 a representative of the Basel Mission (Swiss) arrived at Victoria for the purpose of establishing a Basel Mission Church.

In 1887 Germany annexed Victoria. The original church founded by Alfred Saker and his faithful followers was taken over by the Basel Mission, since previous efforts of the American Baptist Steffens for continuous Baptist leadership had failed. (More is being said elsewhere about the American efforts.) The Basel Mission paid the amount of two thousand pounds for Baptist lands and buildings. The German Government took over control of other Baptist land and buildings for which no compensation was paid. It was in this year also that a German government officer established government posts at Bali in the interior. In the following years more became known about the tribes living in the interior of Cameroons.

In 1895 and 1896 the first large plantation of cocoa was established by the German firms Woerman and Janzen. The Germans declared Victoria and its vicinity crown land because "there were no actual owners."

EVENTS IN THE BEGINNING OF THE 20TH CENTURY

1902 — After several successful expeditions against natives in the interior, the German officer Pavel founded Bamenda Station. From here the subjugation of the Bali people and other tribes was carried out.

1906—The German officer von Glauning subjugated the Bansa Tribe and neighboring peoples.

1913—Practically all Bamenda Division was under control of the German officers. Sporadic risings—usually very small—were easily subdued.

1914—Beginning of war between British and German Colonial troops. British were defeated at

first. In October the Germans gave up Bali and Bamenda.

1916—British Civil Administration was begun.

1920—The British and French authorities submitted drafts of mandates to the League of Nations.

1921—League of Nations confirmed the formation of the British and French Mandates.

1946—After the Second World War the United Nations Organization formulated plans of trusteeship for mandates. Important features of legislation are subsequently being accomplished in the return of plantation land to natives and the formation of the Cameroons Development Corporation which, under the supervision and direction of expert British and native people, operates the former German-held plantations of bananas for the benefit of the native population.

THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT IN THE CAMEROONS

In connection with the account of historical events, it is interesting to see what the British government in the Cameroons is like, what the attitude of the government is to the native people and how the natives react towards the government.

The former German Cameroons, as pointed out before, was established a mandate of the League of Nations after the first World War. The far larger portion of the Cameroons was placed as a mandate under the care of the French government, and that portion starting, roughly, from the mountain range towards the boundary of Nigeria was handed over as a mandate to the British government. Thus, the eastern boundary of the British mandate follows well defined geographical features, the Mungo River in the south and the mountain range extending in a more or less northeasterly direction.

Politically, the area of the mandate — now the trusteeship under the United Nations Organization — being inhabited in the south by Bantus and Semi-Bantus and in the north by Semi-Sudanese and Sudanese, was divided into two large sections, in accordance with the predominance of these people. Thus, the southern area became “Cameroons Province” and the northern area became that part of the mandate administered as a portion of Northern Nigeria. Cameroons Province is that part, then, which is administered as a part of Southern Nigeria. This is interesting because the local government of Cameroons Province lies largely in the hands of the Native Administration, consisting of tribal chiefs and their councillors who are pagans, while Northern Cameroons — and that includes our mission field of Mambila — is administered by a Native Administration which is Moslem.

The boundary between these two areas runs between our mission fields of Kaka and Mambila. The main seats of the colonial government of these areas are widely separated. For Cameroons Province it is Buea in the southern extreme of the mandate, and for Mambila and the other areas in the north it is Yola, a town located outside the mandate, namely, at the Benue River, in Adamawa Province of Nigeria. These facts at times complicated missionary administration because the missionary-in-charge had to deal with two sets of colonial officers located at these widely separated points and representing different policies. However, the colonial government always realized this difficulty and was always indulgent, friendly and cooperative, which are attitudes sincerely appreciated by the missionary.

DIVISIONS AND AREAS

These large political entities are subdivided into smaller aggregates, according to the predominance of tribal groups and administrative facilities. These

smaller aggregates are called "Divisions." Cameroons Province, for instance, consists of the following divisions: Victoria Division, Kumba Division, Mamfe Division and Bamenda Division. As each division represents an appreciable number of sub-tribes with their own chiefs, the divisions are subdivided into "Areas" so that each division has quite a number of "Areas."

As each area represents the geographical habitation of a tribe or a sub-tribe and as the chiefs of these areas are held responsible for law and order — a feat which is accomplished by means of providing these chiefs with civil authority and its technical adjuncts, court and court scribe — these areas are designated "Court Areas." It is for this reason that Bamenda Division, for example, has quite a number of Court Areas in some of which our mission operates; Bekom Area (or Kom Area), Ndop Court Area, Bansa Area (or Nsaw Area), Mbem Court Area, Mfumte Court Area, to mention only a few.

Cameroons Province as well as Adamawa Province — to which Mambila belongs administratively — are governed by a staff of specially trained and well qualified British colonial officers. They are, in short, the Resident who is the chief administrative officer of the province, assisted by provincial officers of the various departments as, for instance, the Provincial Medical Officer, the Provincial Education Officer and others. The divisions of the province are administered by Senior district officers, district officers and assistant district officers, together with their departmental staffs — the Medical Officer, the Forestry Officer, the Agricultural Officer, the Divisional Engineer, the Veterinary Officer and others.

The administrative staff of a division is responsible to the Resident. The District Officer administers the division and its court areas to which he is assigned. Like his superiors he has many

and great responsibilities, such as maintaining law and order among the tribes, revenue, improvement of standard of living, making the benefits of Western civilization available to the native population, planning improvements in health, education, trade, communications, agriculture, forestation and other aspects of native land and life. He and his staff spend long hours in the divisional offices and stay in close contact with the chiefs by means of conferences and extensive trekking of the areas.

The last link, but not the least one, is the group of native chiefs and their respective localities. They are responsible to the district officers and see that plans and measures coming from the colonial government are carried out by the people. Further, the chiefs or village heads are responsible for court procedures involving civil cases. A court scribe (recorder, clerk, "secretary") is charged with recording court proceedings. The Nigeria police — a body of well-trained and fine native men from Nigeria and the Cameroons — aid in the apprehension of criminals, and numerous messengers, usually men from local areas, help in relaying messages and instructions.

Shortly after the second World War the mandates were abolished and "trusteeships" were established under the United Nations organization. This change has had very little bearing on the practical aspect of government except for the fact that it enabled the British government to proceed more rapidly with the realization of plans for the betterment of native life.

BENEFITS OF THE COLONIAL ADMINISTRATION

At the outset it may be said that among all the African people the Nigerian and Cameroons natives enjoy the greatest amount of personal liberty, prosperity and security because the colonial administration of both the Crown Colony (compris-

ing Lagos and its immediate vicinity), the Protectorate (all of Nigeria) and Trusteeship (the Cameroons) is the most advanced type of colonial administration. What are the evidences for this statement?

Except for a relatively insignificant and small area of crown land (Lagos and its vicinity), the land belongs inalienably to the native people. Land is not for sale. It may be rented by outsiders, however, only with the consent of the chief and his people. Among the people themselves, land is apportioned according to ancient native customs which are safeguarded by the government. In support of progressive policies regarding the land and its continued usefulness, the government employs well-trained specialists — agricultural, forestry, veterinary officers — who operate extensive and highly beneficial stations for the advancement of agriculture, animal husbandry, forest economy and the protection of grazing lands. Eligible natives are trained in these branches of service and help in carrying out far reaching policies.

An equally important policy exists for the safeguarding and advancement of the rights and liberties of the individual, while, at the same time, abstaining from drastic interference with ancient customs. It is in this way that, for instance, the local government is carried out by the local chiefs who are either hereditary, elected or appointed office holders.

Their leadership is not autocratic. If a native believes to have justifiable complaints, he may ask and obtain a decision through the court. Appeals can be made to the High Court, if such is thought advisable. On many occasions a native lawyer, trained in England, is employed for defense. This democratic concept of government is evident also

in the religious life of the people, for Nigeria and the Cameroons are lands in which religious liberty is assured and practiced.

A steady and rapid progress towards high goals in the people's welfare is achieved by the efforts of specialist officers in the departments of education, including secondary and higher education, the departments of health, medical service and labor, the Public Works Department, the Judiciary Department and others. Some of the more outstanding achievements are: the construction and operation of a large, up-to-date General Hospital at Victoria, the erection of an excellent Teachers' Training Center at Kumba, the completion and extension of public roads, the establishment of a large and effective as well as beautiful Agricultural Station near Bamenda, the establishment of a Veterinary Station near Kumbo in Bamenda Division, the return of many thousand square miles of plantation land now being operated by the government for the benefit of the people, the extension of education, medical and health services in numerous localities, the effort at mass literacy, industrial training and the increasing participation of Cameroons people in governing their own affairs, evidenced by the presence of two Cameroonians in the Legislative Chamber of Nigeria.

Further, the government has been making, and is continually making available opportunities and scholarships for eligible Nigerians and Cameroonians. Frequently these young men and women are invited to England in order to be educated at universities and colleges. These graduates return to their home land, becoming qualified officers in the various departments of government. Thus the colonial government provides the means for advancement and equality. Anyone who proves his achievement and capability may acquire equal cultural standing with the White Man.

THE NATIVE PEOPLE AND THE GOVERNMENT

The people of the Cameroons realize in an increasing measure the advantages and benefits brought to them by the colonial government. It is the educated native who realizes in a special way that these policies mean advancement, prosperity and security to his country, for it is he who has been signally benefitted by the democratic and Christian government — the British colonial government and its representatives, the administrative and departmental officers.

The large majority of the people live in serenity and tranquility. They enjoy peace and happiness in their land, formerly torn by tribal wars and bloodshed. It is because of these material and spiritual benefits and accomplishments that the native people like the colonial officers and support them in all their efforts. Countless hearts beat under dusky skins in gratitude and appreciation for what the government is doing for them and their land.

The Cameroons, it may be said, have become a link in the chain of civilization stretching over Africa. This link may be strong and durable under the strain of political and racial tensions. It may help to save Africa from materialistic doom and atheism. It can accomplish that only if this link is tempered and annealed in the process of beneficial human relationships. And that is possible only through the Spirit of God in the native Christian churches.

What will the future historian say when he reviews the events of the twentieth century? Will he be able to mention the names of heroic personages in the fight against evil? Alfred Saker was instrumental in abolishing human sacrifice. Will we, as successors to Alfred Saker be successful in

liberating the native soul from the menace of atheism and deliver him from the pit of paganism? Lives, substance and time must be surrendered to God for the establishment of the Baptist Church and the strengthening of the new spiritual life. Then the future historian will be able to report spiritual advances. Then Christ the Master will say to his servants: "WELL DONE . . ."



QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What were some of the early accomplishments of Missionary Alfred Saker?
2. How did the Cameroons become a British mandate following the first World War?
3. How is it true that the Cameroons have become a link in the chain of civilization stretching across Africa?
4. What is meant by "divisions" and "areas" in the Cameroons Province?
5. Does the land of the Cameroons belong to the native people or to the British government?
6. What have been the benefits of British Administration?

CHAPTER THREE

A Trek Through the Cameroons Country

By Missionaries Edwin and Verna Michelson

Cameroons Province is a long narrow strip of land under British Mandate in West Africa extending inland 400 miles from the Atlantic Ocean. It lies between the British Colony of Nigeria and Cameroun under French Mandate, as if it were a buffer state between two enemy nations. Cameroons Province is from seventy-five to one hundred miles wide, and lies from four to seven degrees north of the equator. It is for the most part very mountainous, and because of the altitude the seven Baptist mission stations enjoy a cool climate.

The Balondo and Bangolan areas of Belo Field as well as the south half of Soppo Field are the only low lying, hot territories in which Baptist mission churches are to be found. The British Cameroons are quite heavily populated. The British Government estimates that there are one million natives living in the land including Adamawa Province, where our Mambila Field is located. The Lord has given us as a denomination the responsibility to bring the Light in Christ to this people living in darkness.

MT. CAMEROONS OVERLOOKING SOPPO

Our oldest field is the Soppo Field, located in Victoria Division in the forest belt of the coast. It includes the tropical port of Victoria where Alfred Saker first landed. A visitor upon entering the port on a clear day will see from the boat the natural volcanic harbor with palm trees and green vegetation surrounding the small city. In the distance lies the rugged, steep Mt. Cameroons, rearing its peak to the height of 13,800 feet. Upon very rare occasions the large volcanic mountain is

snow-capped as it towers above the timber line in all its majesty.

Here in Victoria the visitor may also see the "suburb" of Bota, the abbreviated word for the once world-famous German Botanical Gardens. Various types of tropical fruit trees, palms, shrubs, and flowers are still to be found here. Getting on a truck the visitor can be taken to Soppo Station on tarred roads through twenty-two miles of beautiful palm oil and banana plantations up the side of Mt. Cameroons to an altitude of 2,800 feet, where the air is much cooler and the scenery even more beautiful. A short, twisting, stony road is a shortcut from Victoria to Soppo being only fourteen miles of uphill climb. On either road one will see Cameroons Baptist Mission Churches, and as the truck passes the European-dressed natives take their loads off their heads to look and to wave, or men sitting before their houses playing with their children while the mother preparing food in the tumbledown kitchen will pause to stare in curiosity and return a greeting.

The Bender Memorial Church is first to come into view around the trees as one approaches Soppo from either direction—and then the Soppo house and the school buildings and teachers' homes. Down below is Soppo native village with its homes built of palm thatch roofs, post and roughly split board walls and dirt floors. A few houses are of cement and iron sheet or zinc roofs. The native chickens, pigs, goats, sheep and cows are wandering about everywhere, even on the mission compound.

From Soppo Station one can get a close view of Mt. Cameroons. Two hundred feet higher and one and one-half miles away from Soppo is Buea, the Post Office and government seat. The British Resident, District Officer, Medical Officer of Health, Magistrate, Education Officer, Superintendent of Police, and Post and Telegraph Engineer may be

found here as well as the Cameroons plantation officers. On the side of Mt. Cameroons above Buea among the trees one can see the cows from the plantation farms grazing lazily. In the opposite direction one can see down for miles over the mangrove swamps the French port of Duala and, to the south into the Atlantic Ocean.

Down below, between Duala and Victoria, is the British banana port of Tiko from which millions of bunches of green and also boxed, dried bananas are shipped yearly. Here also the plantations have their saw mills and brick kilns. It is hot and muggy at our Tiko church and surrounding churches.

GOING TO THE GRASSLAND COUNTRY

Still in the forest belt behind Mt. Cameroons lies the Balondo or Kumba area. It has no main station and no regular missionary, but it has many churches and native Christians. It is supervised by the Soppo missionaries. In elevation it is only slightly above sea level. It is the most tropical of all Baptist mission fields, having its jungles, insects, heat and rain. Its rivers are so large that during the rainy season it is impossible to trek during the month of August and most of September. The forest is so heavy overhead in many paths that photography is impossible. Many thousands of the most beautiful butterflies are found in Balondo. It is not uncommon to find a colorful African variety of orchids, as well as other flowers growing wild. To teach the beauty of the salvation of Christ to the natives here is the world's greatest joy.

The gravel and dirt motor road leading from Soppo to Kumba and Balondo continues on to Bamenda through the low, swampy, diseased and sparsely populated Mamfe Division, where there are no Baptist mission churches. This section of the road is new, and formerly one had to enter

French Cameroun to reach Bamenda. Driving along this road one notices the change in building materials and architecture. The roofs are of grass and the round walls are built of mud. Palm trees are fewer and hills and mountains, instead of being covered by forests and jungles, are now grass covered. Trees are found only in the ravines. The hills and mountains leave their volcanic appearance and for miles one sees the rolling hills. The natives wear less and less clothes as one goes farther inland.

This is the grass field. The natives are shy and more friendly. The outward appearances of civilization are less and less to be seen. The cane is replaced by the hunter's spear. The "mukala" or white man's hat is replaced by the woven cap. The Bekom cloth is seen instead of the suit. Bare feet pace the roads instead of auto-tire, hand-made shoes. Teeth are filed and skins are decoratively scarred. Skins are blacker and bodies are stronger. These people are more susceptible to the Gospel of Christ. This is Bamenda Division.

The government station is situated on a very high cliff overlooking the wide countryside. There is the African hospital, operated by an English doctor, jail, post office, administrative offices (in an old German fort) and the homes of British officials as well as of native clerks. The motor road twists and turns for more than a mile down the side of the cliff before it enters the new Cameroons Baptist mission site at Bamenda at the foot of the cliff and passes on to the native settlements. The new brick and sheet iron missionary home is beautiful to behold, and other new buildings have gone up, including a church.

The Lord has blessed our work here in a wonderful way. This is the home of the field superintendent, Rev. Paul Gebauer, and a stopover for

missionaries coming to Bamenda on business. Near the Baptist mission in Bamenda is the British "Trading Post" known as the United Africa Company (U.A.C.) where missionaries can purchase gasoline, kerosene, sugar, flour, soap, salt, cloth and tinned goods when these things are available. Going north, it is the last outpost for supplies. Near the U.A.C. is the large Bamenda native market.

FROM BELO STATION TO NDU

On the smooth, narrow, twisting road beyond Bamenda twenty-nine miles away is Belo Station of the Bekom area. The road follows the contours of the hills, taking hairpin turns on tiny bridges that make the newcomer gasp. All along the road men and women are walking with their loads on their heads, going to or coming from the market to buy and to sell food and clothing. When they hear the truck coming, they stop and turn to look, nonchalantly puffing on their hand made, clay pipes. The Belo mail carrier with mail and provisions can be seen walking on the road regularly between Bamenda and Belo. The hills get higher and more beautiful as one goes on until he is lost in their splendor. As is typical of the grass field, the trees grow in clusters mostly in the lower places. In January and February the natives clear the land by burning it, making the hills black and ugly. The African sun soon brings back their green beauty. Belo station is built upon a small hill surrounded by a valley. A few miles in every direction, the mountains form a bowl around the station in unspeakable beauty.

A thunder storm at Belo is an experience which one never forgets. As the wind and rain come swooping down into "Belo-bowl" and the lightning flashes and the thunder roars, the tiny human being is left at the mercy of the elements. For a fearful person it is an agonizing experience. For him who enjoys God's "fireworks" it is a matchless sight.

Eight miles from Bamenda on the Belo road there is a fork. To the left is the Belo road, to the right seventy-six miles away is Ndu Station of the Nsungli area. Ndu is the highest Cameroons Baptist mission station, having an elevation of 6000 feet. For many miles in every direction the grass-covered, rolling hills may be seen. Clusters of grass-roofed houses comprising village quarters are on many hillsides. The elevation brings the cold which makes a sweater or jacket comfortable, and at night a warm blanket is appreciated the year around. The smoky homes and lack of sufficient clothes causes the Africans in this cold spot to have colds and often pneumonia. The planted eucalyptus trees of Ndu Station will some day solve the fuel supply, even as they now add to its beauty.

At Ndu the motor road continues in another direction, and the visitor to Mbem must walk or ride horseback. There was once a road part of the way, but it is no longer kept in repair. Perhaps the old roadbed will be rebuilt for motor travel in the future. It is a two day trek over the rolling hills, and also over one of the steepest in the Cameroons, Rom Hill. Mbem Station of the Kaka area lies in a large valley. It cannot be seen until one is almost there. Its many brick buildings are a sight which the weary traveler can hardly forget. Kaka has quite a good supply of mahogany for building purposes also. In certain sections of Mbem Field the oil palm trees grow in abundance, providing the natives with this necessity.

A TWO-DAY TREK TO WARWAR

The trip from Mbem to Warwar, the main station in the Warwar Field, must also be made on foot. During this two day trek the traveler actually leaves Cameroons Province and enters Adamawa Province which is governed from Nigeria. Warwar is more than 400 miles from the coast. The area is

quite sparsely populated. Mohammedan Fulanis with their roaming herds of cattle are seen everywhere on the high, flat hills. Trees are less plentiful here in Adamawa than elsewhere. However, a good supply of heavy sawing Iroko timber (a kind of mahogany) for building purposes has been found near Warwar.

Arriving at Warwar, the first view of the station is from the top of the plateau as one looks down into the broad valley of the Donga River. A trickling stream making its way to the big river from a spring supplies Warwar with water.

Here in Mambila are found the larger animals. Lions are sometimes seen, but they are seldom dangerous. Monkeys are found everywhere in the Cameroons and even here in Mambila. They provide good meat for the natives when they can catch them. Even in Mambila as in all West Africa the real danger to life comes not from ferocious large animals but from insects and tiny unseen germs.

There are only two major seasons in West Africa. The rainy or wet season begins usually in July and lasts until the beginning of November. The rest of the year is known as the dry or growing season. During the height of the wet season the rainfall is heavy, and especially so on the coast where it has been recorded that, in a certain place, from 396 to 432 inches (33 to 36 feet) of water falls every year. It is known as the second wettest spot in the world. Only Burma has more rainfall.

Inland in the "grass fields" the rain falls in the afternoon and during the night giving the missionary the opportunity to do some trekking in the morning during the wet season. On the coast a heavy downpour can begin with only a few minutes warning. As wet as the rainy seasons are, so the growing seasons are dry. Sometimes in

January or February rain will not fall for a month or two at a time. While it is cold in America, in Africa we have our dry, warm weather.

CROPS AND FRUITS IN THE CAMEROONS

It is during the dry season that the Africans clear the bush and put in their gardens or farms. The men clear the land and the women dig up the soil and also plant, cultivate and harvest all by hand. The crops planted are coco yam, corn, rice, cassava, plantain and peppers. Coco yams are the staple food. The plant looks a little like an overgrown rhubarb with huge stems and gigantic leaves. The root of this plant is prepared in various ways and eaten. It is of a very starchy consistency.

Corn is grown more extensively in "the grass field" than on the coast. Rice is becoming quite popular, especially on the coast. Rice does not necessarily have to be grown in flooded areas. It grows well in dry soil. The cassava or tapioca looks somewhat like a young oak tree in a garden. Its fleshy root is ground up and dried over a fire in a pan to be eaten by adding water, or the ground mixture is boiled and rolled into leaves like little, long sausages.

The plantain grows and looks so much like a banana bunch that the new missionary finds it impossible to tell the difference until he learns more about them. The starchy plantain is boiled and eaten as we eat potatoes. Many times it is also boiled with meat in palm-nut oil. The small, strong, red peppers are to be found in almost every garden. This pepper is used to strongly season all foods. The African eats only twice a day and with his starchy diet it is a common thing to see little Africans with very large "tummies". Then too most of them have worms.

There are many fruits in the Cameroons. Oranges, grapefruit, bananas, pineapple, avocado pear, papaw or papaya, and mangoes grow in abundance in this fertile land. The coast is favored in the available fruits. The papaw is the fruit of a fast growing tree which resembles the muskmelon in appearance and taste. Only the female tree bears fruit. The mangoes are a stringy, juicy, large stoned fruit of the tree resembling the ash. The fruit is egg-shaped with a taste peculiar to itself which may be described as somewhat like a peach. Bananas may be had all year round while the others are all seasonal fruits. The Africans eat all of these fruits when they can find them, but rarely will any of them plant a tree. It is hoped that the missionaries can bring more fruits like apples and grapes into the land.

The missionary garden introduces many new vegetables into the Cameroons. Beans, peas, carrots and potatoes are very, very slowly working their way into the diet of a few Africans.

Scrubby pigs, sheep, goats, chickens and fish provide the meat for the Cameroons native. Much beef is raised by the Mohammedan Fulani and sold to the natives and white men in Africa. Hunters often shoot small deer (Flitumbo), bush rats, porcupine and bush fowl. The animals owned by the natives are very destructive to the farms. Some villages suffer hunger because of the destruction of their own uncontrollable animals. It is our task to teach them to observe our Lord's command to love one another and respect the property of one's neighbor.

Into this portion of the dark continent our Lord has sent us to proclaim the unsearchable riches in Christ. In this land of contrasts and extremes, Christ can be and is in many cases the ruling power in the lives of Africans.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What is the oldest mission field in the Cameroons and what are some of its characteristics?
2. What is meant by the grassland country in the Cameroons?
3. What makes Bamenda so important for the British government and for our missionary society?
4. Where is Warwar located and what is characteristic of this field?
5. What are some of the crops and fruits that can be raised in the Cameroons?
6. How many seasons are there in West Africa and what distinguishes them from each other?

CHAPTER FOUR

One Million Africans

By Missionaries George and Louise Dunger

The Cameroons plains and mountains were covered in ancient times with virgin forest. Only the highest peaks—Mt. Cameroons, the Manenguba and Santa ranges—reared their barren summits into the tropical sky. Forest giants and impenetrable jungle flourished luxuriantly in the lowlands where meandering rivers flowed placidly. On the mountains rain forests abounded, with gnarled trees and fantastic branch work festooned with hanging moss and lichens. Here occasionally a fire—kindled by lightning or volcanic eruption—consumed large areas of woodland and left mountainside and glen denuded.

As time wore on, the great Sahara Desert to the north extended its reaches and with scorching winds—the Harmattan—invaded perennially the green mansions of the forest. As the forest retreated from the northern mountains, climatic conditions became harsh. Formerly the tropical tornado spent its fury among the massive tree crowns of the mountain forest. Now the swirling atmosphere hurled its heavy charges of water and hail against the hills, scantily covered with struggling vegetation, uprooting the weak and destroying the feeble plant life, cutting gullies, carving ravines, exposing naked rock. Rivulets became raging, thundering torrents carrying in their yellow floods the soil that formerly nourished the tree, the fern and the thicket . . . That was very, very many centuries ago.

WANDERERS ON THE MARCH

While the battle of nature raged between the forest and the desert—the verdant tree and the torrid air—a conflict of far-reaching consequences was fought between the dark-skinned man and the

land that would no longer yield fruit and food. As the forest retreated from the advances of its blistering adversary, so man, families, clans and tribes, began to move. The blistering adversary of the forest had become the enemy of man and by drought and famine forced hungry people on the march. The native became a wanderer, searching for fertile lands and a pleasant abode where he could live in peace and security.

Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of miles from the scene of this strife for survival, a new fire had been kindled in the hearts of the desert dwellers. A fierce and stern, a fatalistic and powerful religion had taken hold of these men. By nature ambitious and resourceful, they banded themselves together at the call of their rulers, and set out to subdue and to conquer, to convert or to slay. The followers of Mohammed were on the march too . . . That happened many centuries ago in the limitless reaches of the Sudan.

Nature and the heart of man set into motion migrations, counter-migrations and wars, destroying old cultures and laying the foundations for new civilizations. It is out of these migrations that the people of the Cameroons emerged. This is their story. They were driven from their original habitations by hunger and conqueror. They migrated from place to place, turning to warriors themselves and driving before them those whom they dispossessed. They settled here and there. Their chiefs engaged in treachery and caused their own people to fight against each other. They intermarried. Some became servants, slaves, a vanquished lot, and others became masters controlling acquired lands and subjugated peoples. They found their livelihood on the sea, braving the perils of the great deep in flimsy canoes. They cultivated the fields in the plains and on mountainside, toiling under adverse conditions. Others engaged in crafts and trade.

Putting the spotlight on the human actors of the drama, it is the Moslem Fulbes and Hausas in the Sudan that initiated the southward move. That move took place shortly after North Africa fell to the Arabs in the seventh century. The Sudan was subjected during the tenth and eleventh centuries. It was in the fourteenth century that the Christian kingdom of Kordofan, Darfur, Wadai and Bornu crumbled under the onslaught of the Arabs from Upper Egypt. Then the pagan Hausas accepted Islam.

In the nineteenth century the Fulbe gained power in Northern Nigeria and combined their religious belief with political ambitions until they succeeded in governing the country. It can be said that, as far as historical records are concerned, none of the pre-European influences has been as significant as that evidenced by the adherents of Islam. This influence has affected the political, economic, social and religious life of the Cameroons people.

ANOTHER MIGRATION PUSHED SOUTHWARD

Another migration was set in motion by the Hamitic peoples who lived in the eastern Sudan. They dislocated the ancient true Negro tribes inhabiting the upper Nile region, and what is now Abyssinia. These tribes were pushed southward until they reached the shores of the Gulf of Guinea, i.e., the areas now known as southern Cameroons and southern Nigeria. Among these people dislocated were the Bantus. The central mass of the Bantus split while migrating, one branch moving, together with the Hamites, farther south while the other branch mingled with the true Negroes and began to settle in the Gulf of Guinea region. It took centuries before these peoples found their present locations in the plains and mountains of the Cameroons. These migrations, then, from the Central Sudan and Eastern Sudan came to a halt. While the people—Sudanese, Hamitic and Bantu, respectively—sought new habitations, tribal wars

were fought, one tribe seeking supremacy over the other. In the course of time the more virile and powerful tribes subjugated and absorbed the weaker ones. Intermarriage and interchange of customs and the formation of new civilizations were inevitable.

While lesser migrations took place from Nigeria to the Cameroons, such powerful tribes as the Bamum, the Wute, the Bulu, Bassa, Tikar, Bansa, Banyang, Bakossi, Bafaw, Balondo, Dualas, Bakweri, Bakundu tribes asserted themselves. Of these the Bamum, Wute, Tikar, Bansa tribes are savannah (grassland) and mountain dwellers, and being influenced, racially as well as culturally, by the Sudanese, were called Sudanese and Semi-Sudanese people. On the other hand the Banyang, Bakossi, Bafan, Balondo, Duala, Bakweri, Bakundu tribes, to mention the principal ones only, inhabited the forest and being influenced by the Bantus were called Semi-Bantu and Bantu people. Thus the Sudanese developed a civilization peculiarly Sudanic and the Bantus developed a civilization peculiarly Bantu. Although they are basically similar, the people nevertheless adhered to their ancient customs and over a period of centuries created distinctive features of life, shown in their activities, beliefs and rituals.

Examining ancient customs it is possible to find evidences of Mediterranean and Egyptian influences. The shape and use of the loin cloth, the making of reed rafts, the use of the wooden headrest, attempts at mummification, shrines, the burial place, carvings and castings are examples of such influences. Many of these acquired features were caused and modified by geographical environment. The Bantu Bimbians, for instance, became expert fishermen, paying tribute to the spirits of the deep sea, and the Sudanese Bali became farmers sacrificing to the spirits of the fields.

THE BANTU AND SUDANESE PEOPLE— THEIR RELIGION

Having looked with a bird's-eye view at the movements of peoples over long spans of time and vast expanses of territory, it is now appropriate to place into focus the Bantus and Sudanese peoples. Contrary to the usual American and European practice, the African—and that includes, of course, the Bantu and Sudanese—practices what he believes, provided he has not been corrupted by the evils of modern civilization. Religion to him penetrates every activity. As the African native cannot be understood apart from his religious beliefs and rituals, it will be necessary to mention them at least in a general way.

Religion is to the Bantu and Sudanese a mixture of beliefs in many gods, incarnation of gods, a kind of fetishism and ancestor worship. More scientifically expressed, these beliefs are called polytheism, anthropomorphism, animism and ancestor worship. Among these the chief beliefs and practices are ancestor worship and the worship of a god which find expression in witchcraft and secret societies. Most every tribe has the belief that there is a Supreme Being. He is thought either to live in the sky or in the earth. If the Supreme Being lives in the earth, people think that it is a goddess. They believe that sky and earth were combined in marriage and therefore use a certain tree as a symbol to signify the connection between them, the tree reaching into the heavens. Sometimes the earth is called the "Great Mother". The Supreme Being is identified with the Sun, rarely with the moon. Then there is the belief in the gods of lightning and rain.

These gods may be represented by symbols which are used in religious ceremonies. One of these symbols may be an earthen pot, containing water or pebbles. Others are: stones, trees, carved posts, images, shells and seeds, animal skulls and verte-

brae, feathers and the horns and feet of antelopes. The people may smear themselves with red dyes, symbolizing the blood of the sacrificed animals. The symbols of the deities are kept in a shrine which is a small hut, adjacent to the chief's or the priest's house. Often these shrines are gaily and symbolically painted and carved.

The African is aware of his needs and sins and therefore sacrifices to the deities. These sacrifices take place especially at seed time and harvest time. They may range from a handful of maize or an egg to a goat, a cow and even a human being. It is interesting that only a small portion of the animal is offered to the gods. The larger portion is consumed by the worshipers themselves. The sacrifice expresses gratitude for blessings, regret for sins and petition for protection. The eating of the sacrificial meal means communion with the deities. The ritual may take a few minutes or may last for days. Often religious instruction and interpretation are given to the participants.

As it can be seen the Bantu and Sudanese have exceedingly primitive ideas about God. However, these ideas show a remarkable parallelism to Christian concepts, enabling the understanding missionary to guide the native from his primitive, harmful, spiritistic custom to the revelation of Jesus and the Christian life.

THE JUJU OF THE AFRICAN NATIVE

The word, "Juju", has often been used in connection with African religious practices. The juju are lesser deities living either on land or in the water. They may take shape as, and in, human beings, and are like men and women, except that they are smaller. Any experienced "Medicine Man", more appropriately called "priest", may see them in his dreams or at sacrifices. There are the good jujus that bring peace, happiness and security to the village, and there are the evil jujus who bring illness and accident. The jujus may dwell in

the iroko tree or in a rock. At times the jujus are symbolized by hollow calabashes or big drums, and they may receive sacrifices similar to those made to the Supreme Being and the spirits.

Besides the juju there are still lesser deities. They are the messengers of the gods, the spirits of the fields, the spirit of fortune and of home life. Frequently the term "medicine man", "witch doctor" or "medicine" is used when describing the natives' beliefs and customs. It would be more correct to speak of the medicine man and his medicine as magic, and of the "witch doctor" as an adept of black magic. This belief in and practice of magic has penetrated every department of life. The medicine man or witch doctor is to reveal and unravel the mysteries of life, both physical and spiritual. These people usually are experts in native psychology.

In many cases the village priest is more powerful than the chief. He has an accurate knowledge of herbs, roots, barks and leaves. Curative as well as poisonous concoctions are produced and administered. Other "medicines" may be a chicken, chicken feathers and bones, chicken blood, lizzards, toads, snakes and human saliva. It is thought that bad "medicines", or poisons, will not affect the innocent. The priest or the witch doctor may injure the soul, divine the future, reveal secrets and perform magical tricks, such as changing a man into a leopard, mix love potions, harm man's shadow, perform miracles, such as producing rain and stopping it, cause pain, sickness and death.

The natives believe in the existence of the soul and life after death. Some say that the shadow of the man is his soul. Others believe in a second soul which lives in a certain house. It is thought that the soul in "the hereafter" continues to have the same existence as on earth. The farmer remains a farmer and the blacksmith remains a blacksmith; the chief will remain a chief and a slave a

"GO YE THEREFORE AND MAKE DISC



HOE



SPEAR HEADS



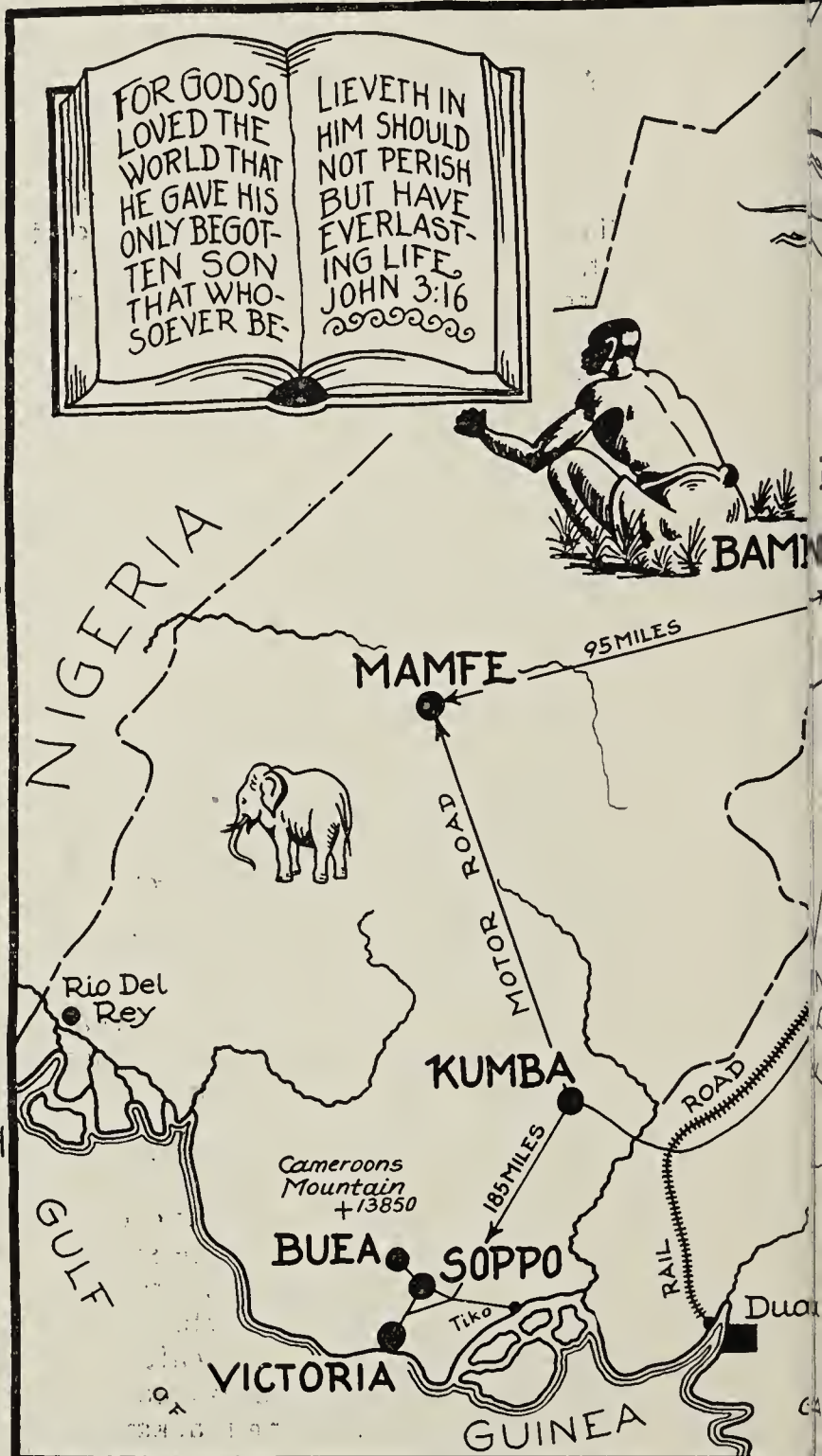
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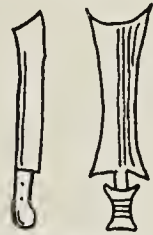


SEND FORTH THY SICKLE, AND REA

PRINCIPLES OF ALL THE NATIONS....”



NATIVE HUT



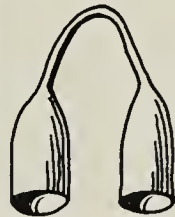
MACHETTES



EARTHEN POT



CHIEF'S "CHAIR"



CHIEF'S BELL

THE HOUR TO REAP IS COME

slave. There are towns and villages, tribes and lands and countries. Some native tribes believe in a judgment day, in a place of torment and a separate place of bliss, the former being beneath the earth and the latter above the earth. Others believe that the soul remains in heaven or hell only a few years when it is reincarnated.

Ancestor worship can be said to be universal. The dead return to earth and visit their relatives. Intercourse with the dead is practiced in various manners. Sick and dying people especially may have glimpses of the dead and their abode. Each family is helped and protected by its dead. Expulsion from home was considered the very worst that could befall man because it left him without the care of the revered and benevolent ancestral spirits. There are cases of misfortune that are believed to be caused by the evil dead. They may, for instance, bring sickness to the family if the spirits have been denied veneration and sacrifice. It is for that reason that the natives erect shrines and retain ancestral pots and stools which are said to have the powers of their deceased owners. The ancestral spirits may return to earth, use the pot and sit on the stool.

FROM BIRTH TO DEATH IN AFRICA

The natives believe that an ancestor, a relative or a friend seeks reincarnation at the time a child is born and that certain jujus may be helpful in accomplishing it. It is said that at the time of incarnation the soul hovers near the house of birth, concealing itself in a tree. In case that two children have died previously it may be said that the new infant was "born three times." The mother and her relatives must observe all tribal rituals relating to birth. Mother as well as infant are washed with water and rubbed with palm oil. While the mother rests on a mat the infant is placed on a plantain leaf beside her. If twins should be born the first born is considered the "senior" and superior.

In former years, prior to the government's regulation relating to infanticide, the Bantus killed the twins either by starvation or injury and placed the mother in an isolation camp in the forest because it was believed that the birth of twins was due to evil spirits. Among the Sudanese the opposite practice was followed. Twins were taught to be a special favor of the Supreme Being and therefore received all possible protection and care. Usually the parents celebrated the occasion with feasts. There are tribes that mold the child's skull.

Usually the child receives several names, indicating circumstances of birth, the name of an ancestor or a friend. The child is weaned after a period from two to four years, the custom depending on the tribal laws. There are no children born out of wedlock and there are hardly any orphans. Among the Sudanese the priest or witch doctor may give one of the many names the child will have. These may be either the parents', grandparents' or any ancestor's name according to the child's sex. At times one of the names may tell of the birth's circumstances, as for instance "Ngando" meaning a crocodile which was killed at his day of birth.

The boy usually receives more attention than the girl. The appearance of the first tooth in the lower jaw is the occasion for a small celebration. If the tooth should appear in the upper jaw the child may be killed. The first tooth that falls out is thrown on the roof. "Medicines" are applied in case the child does not walk at the expected time. When the children are about six years old they will go to the farm with their mother. There they learn to handle the hoe or the machete or carry water, weed and carry small loads.

At the time of adolescence the boys have their teeth filed or chipped, and boys as well as girls are tattooed, which is actually cicatrization. It is at

this time also that they receive instruction in things about which they are ignorant. Circumcision is practiced by practically all tribes.

The dress consists of cotton loin cloth, some of which is home-grown, spun, dyed and sewn. In remote areas loin cloths are made out of tree bark and fibres. Women frequently go about with less dress than the men. In towns, tailored "shorts" and singlets are worn while the women attire themselves in large square or oblong pieces of cloth, artfully draped about their bodies. Necklaces of beads, shells, cowrie shells and metal rings are worn for ornamentation. Likewise, iron and brass bracelets as well as anklets are worn. Among the high class Sudanese and Semi-Sudanese heavy ivory bracelets, which are never removed, are worn on either or both wrists.

MARRIAGE CUSTOMS IN THE CAMEROONS

Marriage may be said to consist of two contracts: first, betrothal and second, marriage. The former may be entered into by the parents concerned for their offspring even before birth or any time thereafter. Actual marriage takes place as soon as the bride is of marriageable age and as soon as the dowry, i. e., the bride's price can be paid by the prospective husband. The dowry may be paid by the fiance in farm work by means of frequent presents of salt, palm oil, cloth, tobacco, chickens, goats, palm wine and money. This may lead the fiance into large and burdensome debts which may take many years to pay back, together with their interest.

At the marriage ceremony the bride is handed over to the groom. In some tribes the bride is carried over the threshold of the groom's hut; in others she is placed on his lap. In still other tribes the wedding rite consists in eating together.

The native considers children the most valuable possession which he has. According to tribal law they either belong to the father or to the mother

while the paternal or maternal grandparents have many rights over their grandchildren.

Likewise the position and status of women is closely defined by tribal law and custom. Although she was paid for by her husband, the wife is not a slave or property treated at will. She does by far the greater part of the farm work and all the housework, such as cooking and rearing the children. If she has property or acquires it by her own effort it will always be her own. Frequently women possess more wealth than men. The women form societies and clubs. They work hard and long hours, but they are not usually the down-trodden beings that outsiders imagine them to be, for in many cases the women hold the whip-hand over the men. The latter are afraid of abusing them.

It is common knowledge that "polygamy" is widespread and may be universal. The women approve of it, for it gives them company, lessens their work and gives them, especially the head-wife, much prestige and social power. Each wife has her own house or room in her husband's compound. If she has elevated social standing and, if her husband can afford it, she may have personal attendants.

Death to the native is a tragic event that occasions the observance of many rites. In case that a young person dies, it is thought that witchcraft, some juju or some "medicine" is the cause. This leads to investigations through the services of a diviner. The funeral rituals must be carried out properly, else the deceased will not be able to enter "heaven," and be compelled to wander about without food or protection. The corpse is washed, the hair is cut, and red camwood is rubbed over it. The feathers of an eagle are placed in the cap if the deceased was a chief. The corpse may be placed on a high chair, while relatives and friends bewail the departure of the soul. The corpse may be buried one or two days after death. There may be attempts at evisceration and embalming.

The grave consists of a shaft and a niche. The corpse is placed either in a sitting or reclining position in the niche. In order to prevent earth touching the corpse, the niche is closed with stones and then the shaft is filled in. The grave may be located under the eave of the roof of the hut of the deceased, beneath the floor of his house or somewhere in the bush, i. e., outside the village. It is thought that communication with the corpse can be continued by means of a hollow reed which leads from the corpse to the outside world.

Usually the possessions of the deceased are buried with him or are distributed among the family and clan members. Sacrifices of chickens and other animals are not uncommon. Usually there is much drinking of palm wine, corn beer, dancing, wailing, shouting and shooting of Dane guns, and often the funeral rituals end in another death. If the deceased died of the results of witchcraft, the witch, if found, undergoes the trial of the poison cup and the victim dies the death of poisoning.



QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What were some of the earliest migrations of people into the Cameroons?
2. How does religion penetrate every activity of life for the African native?
3. What is meant by the word, "juju," as used in connection with African religious practices?
4. What is the concept of the African native as to the existence of the soul and life after death?
5. What are some of the marriage customs in the Cameroons?
6. What is the position and status of women in the Cameroons of West Africa as defined by tribal law and custom?

CHAPTER FIVE

Life In An African Village

By Missionaries George and Louise Dunger

In general, the man, the head of the compound, his wives and their children make up the family in the Cameroons. Often, especially among the Semi-Sudanese and Sudanese, the family comprises the grandparents and the servants also. The compound is fenced in, and the huts are located around the house of the head of the family.

In cases where the children belong to the father and the father's people, the organization is called patrilineal. In cases where the children belong to the mother and the mother's people, the organization is called matrilineal. The latter type of organization can become very involved since the family head may practice polygamy and possess dozens of women from different localities, however of the same tribe.

THE AFRICAN CLAN AND TRIBE

The clan is a group of families which claims descent from a common ancestor, not too distant removed in time. Purity of blood is questionable, however, in many cases. Usually there is a chief or an elder who guards the laws and customs of the clan. Allotment of land, land tenure, determination of seed and harvest times, appointing of hunting and fishing areas are some of the many duties of the chief.

Boundary rights are maintained by the chiefs also. Further, the chief leads religious as well as judicial functions. He is thought to receive his rewards for attending to his duties in "the hereafter." The material advantages that accrue to him are such as: houses, first fruits, game animals, leopard skins, which are the regal symbol, and elephant tusks. It is not infrequent that corruption and craft enter into the chief's office and work.

The tribe usually consists of homogeneous people who are linked together by blood ties, customs and language. It is the language more than anything that shows the differences of tribes.

Usually chieftainship is hereditary. In the case of some of the Semi-Bantu and Bantu it is decided by what may be called "vote", the village elders and important families conducting the "election."

As a rule the people live in the rural areas. Seldom, as in the case of Bansa, do they live in towns which may number thousands of inhabitants. The most ancient and most primitive tribes have the greatest rural population.

The tribe is governed by the chief. There may be a number of lesser chiefs or sub-chiefs who assist the chief in ruling the people. It is quite common that the chief combines the offices of king and priest. In some tribes, as among the Bekom people, there are civil "administrators", the quarterheads, and the priest-king or the Paramount Chief. The latter acts in dealings with the gods, jujus, ancestors and regulates all religious ceremonies. Often he is thought to be semi-divine and therefore has been endowed with special powers for the purpose of maintaining prosperity, fertility and the well-being of his people. The real governing powers often are the secret and juju societies.

A strong sense of justice prevails among all tribes. Justice is administered by means of laws pertaining to civil life on one hand and the religious life on the other. Both are often mixed and not easily distinguished from each other. The prosperity of the people depends on the chief's justice and the observance of the laws. In cases where the government lay in the hands of the secret societies, judicial powers were exercised by those groups also. Court proceedings were conducted in the market place or the "court house" or the chief's compound. Witnesses are respected. Where no witchcraft enters into the case, the "judge" gives

right and fair decisions. The prosecutor is always the injured party. Anyone who was injured could call a public meeting and make his complaint known. The loser had to pay the judge's fees while the winner usually presented him with a gift. Although bribery is an accepted feature, the judge's bias is not tolerated by the public. The "Ordeal" was resorted to when lying and false accusation were evident. Among the Semi-Sudanese and Sudanese the suspected had to drink a potion of sasswood. If the liquid was vomited up, the person lived and was declared innocent. In case that the potion was not vomited, the person died of poisoning, thus proving his guilt.

Among the Semi-Bantu and Bantu the Esere bean is being used in the same way. Other tribes poured boiling palm oil over the hands or body, or the hand had to fetch cowrie shells from the bottom of the pot filled with boiling oil. If the hand was not scalded the person was declared innocent. The punishment for witchcraft and murder was death. Punishment for manslaughter consisted in paying a compensation to the family of the victim. Wounding and assault called for fines. Theft, in some places, was almost as serious as witchcraft and murder. Often death was administered. A more common punishment was public debasement of the thief and flogging. The punishment for adultery was sacrifices; the dowry had to be repaid and the betrothal was broken off.

INHERITANCE CUSTOMS AND TABUS

The natives have regulations about inheritance also. It is customary that the eldest son receives the largest share of the inheritance. Among the Semi-Bantu and Bantu it is the elder brother who succeeds the deceased. It must be borne in mind, though, that it is the family that really possesses the inheritance, the elder members acting as trustees. This idea of family ownership is expressed also in a different way. Usually the household,

the family, is responsible for its members in case of unlawful behavior. It has to provide wives for the sons and make amends in case of adultery, theft and murder. The head of the family may be the senior male, the senior female, spirits or ghosts. As mentioned previously, the wife's property remains her own. She controls it as she likes it. Widows are inherited like any other property, although a son cannot inherit his mother.

It is interesting to know that the land is held by the community. It can never be sold. It is allocated to individuals according to ancient tribal custom, and no other person has a right to its products. The results of the labor on the land belong to him who performed it. Distribution and tenure of land depend on the density of population and the size of the area available. Recently "land hunger" has arisen and boundary disputes are on the increase. There is no doubt that the ownership of the land is connected with religious feeling, for it is in the earth that the ancestors have their abodes. The sale of land would be a violation of religious practice and result in severe punishment by the ancestors, so the natives believe.

There are many "thou shalt nots" in the tribe. These prohibitions are called tabus. They encompass practically every activity of the native. Keeping these tabus ensures the welfare of the family, the clan and the tribe. A person who has broken a tabu and is believed to be punished by God, must not receive help from any one. Particularly, there are marriage tabus, birth tabus, food tabus and general prohibitions. A wedding between members of the same household is never permitted. All deformed children are usually destroyed at birth.

Among some of the Bantu tribes twins were considered offspring of demons and had to be killed. The mother became an outcast. Stillborn children did not receive a proper burial. The southern Bantus welcome the birth of twins. No food de-

rived from a sacred animal, or the sacred animal itself, can be eaten. Among a number of tribes it is forbidden to eat firstfruits until sacrifice has been made. Many tribes do not eat leopard meat because the leopard is thought to be semi-divine. Likewise, crocodiles and hippopotami are not eaten by the Cross River natives because these animals are thought to be used by the ancestors for reincarnation.

NATIVE CLUBS AND SOCIETIES

As the native is one of the most gregarious beings it is natural for him to form clubs and societies. They can be divided into religious, political and social societies. They may have "passive" and "active" members as well as "apprentices". Usually they engage in dancing, wrestling, secret meetings and performing plays. The members adopt costumes peculiar to their society. Some dress to give the appearance of a leopard or an elephant. The members must pay certain fees, either in cash, foods, tobacco or drinks. Some of these political societies check the power of the chiefs, others foster tribal pride and integrity. In some tribes the women's societies are more feared than those of the men. Some of the societies have initiation rites, consisting in cleansing, symbolical death and resurrection and entering the spirit world. They are taught how to protect themselves against witchcraft. The members are believed to be inspired or possessed.

One of the foremost social activities of the clubs and societies is dancing. Unable to express deep feelings and to communicate them in words to their fellow-men the native dances, whether the occasion is one of rejoicing or grief. Dancing consists in moving around in a circle, stamping the ground rythmically while throwing shoulders backward and forward, the head shaking in a nodding motion. At times the knees are bent; at other times the persons stand erect. Often the move-

ments of fishes, birds and men, swimming or fighting, are mimicked. The performers may decorate themselves, using paints, stains, dresses and marks. There is no dance at which there is no drum, either wooden or tympanic. Rattles, clanking boards, and other sound-producing instruments are also used. The dances are classified. There are seasonal dances, juju dances, harvest dances, fertility dances, birth and burial dances, war dances and marriage dances.

Social life is expressed also in wrestling games. Joy and sorrow may be expressed in the playing of musical instruments, such as the drums, harps, xylophones, gongs and flutes. There are games being played as the game called "Mancala" (like a backgammon), "draughts" and others.

What is the native's concept of time? The time during the day is reckoned by the height of the sun. The coastal people often reckon it by the tide. The week has a number of days varying with the occurrence of the market day and rest days. With some tribes the week consists of five days; with others, eight or ten days. The month is reckoned according to the moon. There is no attempt made at making a calendar. During the last few decades natives have adopted the White Man's convenient calendar.

DIFFERENT HOUSES IN THE CAMEROONS

It is interesting to see the differences in architecture of the houses of the racial groupings, the Bantu and the Sudanese. The former usually is a rectangular structure with a single entrance in the center, one central room and adjoining rooms to the right and left. A veranda may run the length of the front of the house. There may be a small kitchen in the rear of the house. The roofs are made out of palm-leaf thatch. The walls consist of bush sticks and bamboo (raphia), plastered with mud. The more advanced tribes use solid clay walls. The houses usually line the path, the street

or the road on both sides. It may be said that this type of house is well adapted to the climate.

The house of the Semi-Sudanese and Sudanese is nearly always square or round, topped either by a pyramidal or conical roof, thatched with thick layers of grass. Usually these houses are grouped in such a way that they form a "compound" in which the family group lives. These houses have bamboo frame walls, plastered with mud or the walls are made of solid clay.

The interior is simple. There are a number of clay benches or stools made out of bamboo. The beds are made out of clay or bamboo also. There may be several rows of pegs or "shelves" which serve as resting places for cooking utensils, such as earthen pots and crockery ware, as well as drinking vessels, such as calabashes of various sizes, and personal belongings such as baskets, bags, guns, cloth and dried corn.

Latrines are not very frequent except in places where the government has asked the people to make them. They consist merely in a deep hole over which has been erected a shed-like structure.

What are the occupations of the Cameroons natives? By far the large majority of the people engage in farming and hunting. During the last decades many men have become petty traders. A small number are craftsmen, such as carpenters, bricklayers and masons. In the coastal and river areas men engage predominantly in fishing. Generally speaking, it is the women who do practically all the work on the farm. There are considerably large areas under cultivation of cocoa and, in the mountain areas, some natives grow coffee. The cocoa growers usually form cooperative societies which enjoy the help of the government. A very small number of natives are truck drivers and mechanics. Thousands of unskilled inland natives work as laborers in the extensive

banana plantations which are operated by white people.

Besides these occupations, the native man engages in tapping the oil palm or raphia palm for palm wine, in collecting palm nuts for the purpose of extracting palm oil, in trapping animals, in the making of pots, masks, mats, baskets, bags and articles such as knives, spear heads, hoes, machetes and axes. There are some natives who engage in the making of "native" salt and soap. Farm products are cassava, maize, guinea corn, cocoa yams, cocoa, beans, plantains, bananas, pumpkins, native "spinach" and ground nuts. Tobacco is grown also.

Much could be said about the method of farming, however, space does not permit to go into detail description. May it suffice to say that the farms are usually located in the valleys and on hillsides some distance from the village for the purpose of safety from domestic animals, the goat, sheep, pig and cattle. The use of milk is unknown to the natives with the exception of the Fulani. Practically all activities of the natives are intimately related to religious beliefs and practices.

A VARIETY OF CAMEROONS LANGUAGES

According to the tribes represented, the Bantu, Semi-Sudanese and Sudanese, there are two main groups, namely, the Bantu languages and the Sudanese languages, the latter belonging to the great group of Hamitic languages.

The Bantu languages belong to that large classification called "agglutinating languages," spoken from West Africa to South Africa, from the Egyptian Sudan to the Cape Colony. Their characteristics are:

1. Inflections are made by means of prefixes and suffixes.
2. Occasional changes in the root forms in order to cause and preserve euphony.

3. Absence of grammatical gender.
4. Alliterative concord.
5. Nouns are in classes—such as the root “ba” meaning persons; “bi” meaning things, etc.
6. Many verb forms.
7. Three past tense forms, denoting the immediate past, the far past and the very far past.
8. Three future tense forms, denoting immediate future, far future and very far future.

Practically throughout the coastal region the Duala language is spoken and understood. The passage John 3:16 reads in Duala as follows: “Ebanja nin-kə rde Loba a tondino wase, na a boli mpom ma Muna, no to nja nu dube mo, a si manama, nde a mabene longe la bwindea.”

The Sudanese languages belong to that large group of “inflectional languages” which is characterized by prefixes and suffixes as well as root changes, thus changing tenses and moods. There are a number of grassland tribes in the Cameroons that speak Fulani and Hausa, the two *linguae francae* of the Northern Area. The familiar passage of John 3:16 reads in Fulani as follows: “Non Alla yiri dunyaru, nde hokki Bido goto danyado mako ngam jabbando mo fuh mayata, amma marran yonki har abada.”

In the Hausa language, it reads as follows: “Gamma Alla ya yi kamnar duniya har ya bada Dansa Haifafa shi kadai, domin dukan wonda yana bada gaskiya gareshi kadda ya lalche, amma ya sami rai na har abada.”

Linguistic barriers are formidable obstacles when the missionary tries to make contact with the native. It is difficult for the missionary to make himself understood, and it is difficult for the native to understand the missionary. He is compelled to use native names which may have meanings that

do not accurately express the Christian concept. The name of the Supreme Being, for instance, among the Bakweris is "Owase"; among the neighboring Dualas it is "Loba"; among the Bakossi it is "Diob"; and among the Bankon it is "Job". This Supreme Being is thought by the Bakweri to be a sky-god. Others ascribe supreme authority to an earth-goddess. What name is the missionary to use to convey the Christian concept of GOD?

THE GOSPEL IS HEARD IN THE BUSH

Virgin forest! Trees, towering two hundred feet. Dark green foliage interspersed with flamboyants. Lianes dangling from the forest giants, choking lesser trees. A swamp; sluggishly moving yellow water; stagnant, humid air. Innumerable dragon flies and multicolored birds. The crash of a falling tree and the harsh cry of a hornbill, swishing through the air. Then a village with square, palm-thatched huts. Gardens with bananas and plantains. Hungry, emaciated dogs. Dirty children. Old people sitting listlessly in the shadow of the roof. A man working at his crude loom and women returning from fishing, nets slung over tired and perspiring bodies. At the end of the village stands a humble chapel. The church teacher speaks to a number of inquirers . . . "And God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son . . ."

Deep blue sky and white, billowing cumuli clouds. Undulating hills. Grass. More grass. On the far horizon a mountain range. Here and there a grove of trees. Red soil and brooks rushing down the hillside. Here and there a village, squatting in the afternoon sun. Round houses with conical roofs, thickly thatched with grass. A few natives dressed in loin cloths and carrying spears. Dogs, chickens, dull-eyed goats nibbling a few blades of grass. A drum sounds and Christians

turn towards the church house. The church teacher begins to sing: "Truly I wish to follow the God-Way"

Then he prays the Lord's Prayer: "Baba min assama" It does not matter where it is, in the bush or in the grassland, in a lively town, in a coastal plantation with thousands and thousands of laborers, in a "fish-town" along the Mungo River, in a brickfield, carpenter shop, at a roadside market. In a house at eventide or in the early morning when the carriers lift their voices in song and prayer before lifting their loads on their heads—the glorious message of salvation is made known!

And so the Christian ministry in evangelistic, educational, and medical service has reached into the hearts of the forest dweller and the grassland people. They have come in contact with Christian spiritual forces. Many a villager has surrendered to God. The old is passing away, and the new has taken hold of his heart.

THE AFRICAN CHRISTIAN

The native Christian, however, resembles the white Christian as little as torrid Africa resembles the tempered West. The Christian of western civilization has become the visionary of the Church Universal, undertaking steps for its realization. The western Christian is like the average tree in the average forest; he is like the gentle air and the fleecy cloud of the temperate zone. His spiritual life may be likened to the exquisite beauty of the spring, the busy summer, the mature charm of fall and the winter, inviting hibernation and contemplation.

Not so with the African Christian! He is like his vast plains, extending before the dazzled eye in crystal clarity or the shimmering haze of the Harmattan. He is like his precipitous mountains at whose feet lies forbiddingly the forest primeval

and at whose head lie snow and ice. He is like his wide and placid rivers and like thundering cataract, like the towering tree and the savage bush. He is like Africa's uneasy calms and the sudden tornado.



QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. How is the family organized among the Cameroons natives?
2. How is justice administered in a native village?
3. What are some of the native clubs and societies in which the people participate in social activities?
4. What are some of the occupations in which the natives engage?
5. How are the houses of natives different according to the area in which they live?
6. What are some of the characteristics of the African Christians?

CHAPTER SIX

From Magic to Faith

By Missionaries Gilbert and Mildred Schneider

What is meant by "the paganism" of the Cameroons? Here are four suggestions: the overpowering place of fear; the mingling of magic and witchcraft; the lack of a firm experience; and the crude forms and expressions of religion.

Who are these animists, or primitive people, as they are called? They are men and women, boys and girls, just like all of us, but with a different color of skin and kinky hair. They are scattered widely over Africa and are formed into groups which are called tribes. Most white people call them savages. We hope that our Baptist young people do not call them savages, but people who need the Light of Jesus Christ in their lives just as we need that Light. The natives of the Cameroons, among whom your missionaries work, are animists with the exception of Christians and Mohammedans. Their way of life has been described as traditional, natural and spontaneous. Let us explain.

THE AFRICAN WAY OF LIFE

Their way of life is **traditional**, that means, they do not know how to read and write, so their culture is handed down from one generation to another by word of mouth. Father tells son, and mother tells daughter the things they should know and what to do and what not to do. You might ask the question, "Do they ever learn any new thing?" Well, it is true that this way of passing things on from mouth to mouth is almost a complete bar to progress. For this reason the message of Jesus Christ comes to people who are accustomed to inherited tradition and like it. The past, beyond the memory of living men, appears to them full of

mystery, and if they would go against their father's saying, trouble would be sure to come.

Secondly, their way of life is **natural**, that is, they are mainly concerned with supplying their natural needs and desires. They think of their food, house, children and remaining safe from harm. You can see that every day is just like the day before and tomorrow will bring the same needs and desires as yesterday. We modern Americans would probably soon go mad with such an existence.

Their culture is **spontaneous**. Their religion had no founder and no important dates or happenings. It is just part of life, taken for granted. If you would ask them about their way of life and why they do what they do, they could give no reason and assign no cause to their "country fashion".*

There are many tribes in the Cameroons. Your missionaries work among the Bakweri, Duala, Bekom, Bansa, Nsungli, Kaka, Mambila, only to mention a few. They differ in many ways, in religion as well as in customs. But their attitude toward life and their reactions to nature and the spirit world are all alike. They can therefore be considered together with no great injustice to any one particular tribe.

The problem of dealing with the native animistic attitude toward life is far from simple. The natives who have accepted Christ have only partially laid aside their former ideas of life. They may change many of their outward habits, but if we had been nourished on their diet and had had it served for breakfast, dinner and supper every day, so to speak, we could not easily erase it from our minds. Do not Christians in America and other enlightened countries also cling to old superstitions, fears and dreads? You will agree that they do, so do not be too harsh with these first generation Christians in this country. So far as the Christian Way of

* "Country fashion" means customs and habits of a given place. It is a phrase taken from pidgin English.

Life is concerned, it must be left to each reader to determine for himself the extent to which these habits of mind will play their part. May we state, however, that these habits of mind are more or less serious indications of a failure to believe in God's providence as being over all his works, and over his people, in everything we do. So it should not really matter if a black cat crosses our path, or if we begin a journey on Friday the thirteenth.

ANIMISM, THE RELIGION OF THE NATIVES

Let us now come to grips with this word, animism. It is an attempt by the native to explain the world in which he lives and breathes. It is a belief that nature, animate and inanimate, is peopled with, and possessed by living spirits. The word probably comes from "animus", which is a Latin word meaning spirit or breath.

The native can see that he is a living spirit and can cause things to happen because he wills that they shall happen. So, he thinks there must be spirits, big and little, fat and thin, tall and short, just like himself, which cause everything to happen. To the native the thing back of any cause is a spirit, which, of course, is not visible. If water flows, if fire burns, if the stone remains in its place, if the spark springs forth from the tinder box, if one bark cures and another kills, if the seed springs up, if the bird flies, if the monkey steals, it is because that is "the fashion" of their particular spirit.

To the native the dream gives rise to such an idea. All of us know something about dreams. When we dream, it would seem by experience that we are not governed by the laws of our waking experiences. Our body remains in bed, asleep, while our "spirit" soars away to do other more exciting things. After all, there is nothing exciting about sleeping, is there? To the native this dream life is something real, as real as eating beefsteak and ice cream is to us. This is the philosophy of

the animist and it really lies back of all he thinks and does.

Out of these ideas comes his religion. He thinks constantly of those spirits which touch his life and control it. The spring furnishes him with living water. The banana or cassava, the breadfruit tree, all give him not only food and drink but other necessary provisions for his simple life. Such facts are bound to remain all-important in his thinking under these circumstances. The native loves children, plenty of children, to keep the family going. He hates disease and calamity. His enemies are many, such as disease, insects, animals, storms, man and drought. Within the circle of his interests his needs are not predictable and so demand aid from the spirits which he believes are in control of human life.

The spirits are those of nature, and being a spirit of nature, they take on the character of the nature from which they come. This is a very important point in our study. We must ask ourselves the question, "What is nature like?" As you all know, it can be kind to us and afford us great pleasure. Our hearts are full of awe and reverence when we see a beautiful rainbow or sunset. "In the spring a young man's fancy turns to thoughts of love"—and why shouldn't it be so in view of the budding wonderland of beauty in that season? We also know that nature can seem cruel as a flood or tornado descending upon us. The natural world at best is not consistent, and the same can be said for the spirits of nature.

Now let us think as the African thinks. Attribute a soul or spirit to each object in the world, whether animal, vegetable, or mineral. Willoughby writes in "Nature Worship and Taboo" about African hunters who had killed an elephant and returned to their village with it. They immediately made an offering to the spirit of the deceased elephant which had accompanied them to the village. Then

the spirit went back to the herd to protect the elephant which had "eaten its name". The natives think of animals as they do of their own tribesmen: one dies and another inherits his position, "eats his name" as they say.

Willoughby also tells about the custom of carpenters who must propitiate the spirit of a tree before they cut it down for timber. The priest of the forest goes with the carpenter and pours the blood of a sacrificed animal on the roots of the tree, and they eat a sacred meal there. A similar ceremony has to be performed before the smelters may fell a tree for the purpose of making charcoal for their fires, and the spirit of the hill must be propitiated before iron ore is dug.

THE POWER OF FEAR IN AFRICAN LIFE

If a magician wants to cast a spell in Africa, he needs nothing more than some nail pairings, hair clippings or sweat scraped from sandals, or even dust from a footprint. The natives fully believe that personality extends in secretions, nails, hair and intimate possessions. Perhaps some woman reading this chapter would like to make sure that her husband will love her dearly now and forevermore. The African prescription is: rub hands and arms with a medicinal charm ointment; rub it off, now that it is mixed with part of yourself; and then join it with some of your husband's food—unknown to him! Very simple, isn't it?

When the native lives in such a world and knows of no **one** who is above nature, he is more than likely to be controlled by fear. He lives more by fear than confidence in God and his fellowmen. His life is not normal. It is apparent that fear is the central fact in his attitude toward life.

It was Christ's desire to remove fear from man's life, for neither the life of the individual nor that of the community can be built on fear. There must be trust and confidence, or else life is disruptive and chaotic. The native has little faith in the

spirits on which he must depend. Because of this fact, there is little confidence and faith in his fellow-men, especially if they are of another tribe or clan.

How does the native approach these spirits on which he depends? He does not sit down and meditate but he does whatever he thinks will give him help or relief in the situation he faces at the moment—anything that will keep him and his loved ones from danger or harm. Most likely, the native will be found mumbling incantations and performing acts which are believed to bring the desired result, not by the aid of some spirit but in spite of it. The pagan thinks that he has learned that by saying this and doing that he can secure what he desires, or ward off what he fears, by a power which he himself possesses. This pure magic is not a part of true religion. This is a prevalent attitude in the Cameroons.

Sometimes he gives himself to what we would call worship. He prays or sacrifices to the spirit or spirits, making requests in a true spirit of humility. This kind of attitude we as missionaries do not try to root out but we try to build on it, for we have not come to destroy in this case but to fulfill.

There are four outstanding characteristics of animists. They believe in powers or spirits outside man upon which his well-being is dependent. They believe that these powers or spirits act on the basis of motives just like their own. They believe that it is possible for man to work upon these powers in order to prevent their harming him, or to cause them to serve him. And they believe that all action should be based on the above three beliefs.

FETISH WORSHIP, JUJU AND WITCHCRAFT

These two words, "fetish" and "juju", are not terms used by the natives. Fetish comes from Portuguese and was used by the explorers of old.

They used the word to designate the objects which they thought the natives worshiped. They were wise enough men to recognize a certain similitude to their own little images and relics of saints, which they called "feitico". Juju, on the other hand, is taken from French, meaning toy or doll.

As you walk through the bush in the Cameroons you may find a little screen of palm fronds, apparently enclosing nothing, and below the screen a pot of palm oil, fufu, or a piece of chicken. If you look further you may find a fetish under a little roof. It may be carved, or sometimes made of grass, shells or other obtainable objects. These images are not worshiped but are said to be merely the messengers and servants of the spirits.

The spirits may be pleased by the sacrifice of a chicken or a mug of beer or a cup of palm oil. If the occasion is an important one, a goat may even be killed. The native usually tries to please the right spirit before venturing into something important, such as planting his farm, harvesting his crops, or beginning a long journey.

The spirits are consulted and guidance is sought on many accounts, and that is where the juju man or witch doctor comes in. He is skilled in many methods. On his performances depend the answer to the question or problem at hand.

The average native is very susceptible to suggestion, and many times the witch doctor can cause the death of a man merely by a spell which he may place on him. In Basil Mathews' book, "Consider Africa," he tells of a missionary, Rev. T. Cullen Young, who was called upon to go a long way by boat down Lake Nyasa to see a splendid Christian printer, who had been with the mission for nearly twenty years, and who had gone home for a holiday. He was dying of witchcraft. Mr. Young landed and found the man wasting away, but still suffering from no specific disease. Helpless relatives sat around him.

What would you have done? Tell the man that witchcraft does not exist, that he and his relatives were all fools? Or would you tell him that in Jesus Christ, who cast out devils near the shores of another lake, there is a stronger power, and then lead the man back to the fellowship of the Christian community that lives by that power? Well, Missionary Young did just that and the man was soon well. Now observe that both the power of the belief in witchcraft and the power of faith in Jesus Christ were effective. It depends upon the spirit of the community in which you find yourself.

Several days ago a Mambila mother brought a small child to the dispensary at Warwar. The child was examined and diagnosed as having a fractured arm. How did it happen? The witch doctor or medicine man had broken it for some reason or another but not the slightest indication was given concerning the reason for such action. The Mambila people were quiet as a tomb. After the child was taken back to the village, the splints and bandages were promptly removed by his spirit-wise grandmother and suddenly the child died. They were the victims of witchcraft, the dread and curse of these people.

In the fetish huts you will see food for the spirit. They believe that only the life or essence of the food is eaten by the spirits. Many times the form of the fruit or meat is removed and eaten by the keeper of the shrine after "the life" is gone out of it.

When a man dies suddenly or succumbs to a serious disease, the natives usually regard it as the direct consequence of the witchcraft of some bad person, acting by means of spirits over which he has gained control by some means.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF WITCHCRAFT

Witchcraft acts in two ways, namely, witching something out of a man, or witching something into him. The witching of something into a man

is far more usual than the other. This is perhaps why many tribes perform a post-mortem examination. That is, they cut the dead man open and investigate the abdominal organs in order to discover the cause of death. The government has forbidden this practice but in Mambila we know of two cases in one month where an examination was performed and the verdict was that a leopard had been witched into each man.

Witchcraft is said to cause more deaths in Africa than disease. We have observed that sickness and death are always attributed to witchcraft in the absence of direct proof of the cause. Consequently, in Mambila if a man is sick he may go to the medicine man to find out whether it is due to natural causes or to witchcraft. He supplies the cock which the diviner takes by the head and the applicant holds by the legs. The former cuts the head off, takes the body and places it on the ground. If it falls over on its back, or to the right side, all is well and there is no question of witchcraft. If it falls on the left side, the applicant's sickness is due to witchcraft, but he will recover. If however, the dead cock falls forward and rests on its amputated neck the applicant's sickness is not only due to witchcraft, but it will prove fatal.

Many times the witch doctor is called at death to find the guilty person. If the person denies the decision of the witch doctor, he is tortured. If he claims "the ordeal," as is usually the case, he drinks the poison cup and dies if guilty. This is known as "trial by ordeal." This practice is vanishing fast in Africa and is only heard of rarely and that in remote places.

In "African Survey" compiled by Lord Hailey, we read that witchcraft is the outstanding problem of the lawgiver in Africa. Belief in witchcraft and magic exists in the mind of the African long after many of its practices have been stopped. The intention of the laws of the government, reflecting

an attitude which regards magic and witchcraft as a form of fraud, are not readily understood by the average native, for they consider the two ways as normal events in their everyday life.

NATIVE CHARMS AND THE WITCH DOCTOR

It would seem that the natives of the Cameroons make charms for everything. There are charms for loving, hating, fishing, planting and hunting. Some charms are worn as a bracelet on the arm or leg; others encircle the hips; still others hang like weights around the neck. A new born child starts with a health charm tied around the wrist, neck or loin and from there on, if everything goes well, he accumulates quite a collection before death comes to that mortal.

All charms are not, however, worn upon the body. Every pagan field has several charms here and there. An American farmer not versed in African custom might call them unique scare-crows if he walked past the field. These are to ensure the unhappy and swift end to prowlers who come for no good cause. It is much more effective than our "Keep Off the Grass" signs at home. No one dares trespass in a thus protected field. We may testify to its effectiveness, for the mission farm at Warwar has no charms and some of its produce has been taken without permission. The native's field, however, with a charm or two will keep out all comers, brave or shy.

Other charms are placed at village entrances, near rivers, canals, or in doorways. Can we not see a rabbit's foot, a lucky charm bracelet or ring, and lucky coins in the possession of our own youth at home any day of the year?

The witch doctor is the defense used by the tribe against witchcraft and sorcery. He is really a jack-of-all-trades. He is a medicine man who knows a great deal about herbs and their medicinal effect upon the lives of people. He is also a dealer in spells. For instance, he takes a stick, rubs it with

some root or another, speaks words of an unknown tongue over it and places it in a plot of land. Evil will befall anyone hurting the crop on that plot or stealing from it. The power of this force in preventing crime and keeping order is very great, indeed. If the person is found who has trespassed after such a spell, "palaver go come plenty," as he would say.

In the third place, the witch doctor is a detective, the Sherlock Holmes of Africa. For a private fee or a secret gift he accepts the challenge to track down any culprit, who when found is subjected to much more than "a third degree". He discovers the sorcerer who by his black magic has caused the sickness or death of a man, or his cattle, or ruined a crop. From this we see that all the witch doctor does is not bad.

There is, however, another side to the witch doctor. If he dislikes someone or some family group, he usually can persecute them until they die or flee from the village. An American missionary, who watched one such man convict a woman of sorcery through divination by bones, challenged his method. Basil Mathews relates how the witch doctor produced calabashes with corks. He handed them round the group and said that whoever could not pull out the cork from his or her calabash was the criminal. The accused woman could not pull out the cork in her calabash. "She is the criminal!" cried the witch doctor. The native group agreed. But the missionary took hold of the woman's calabash and he could not draw out the cork either. He found the witch doctor had moistened the cork, so making it swell. Undoubtedly the witch doctor had a reason for wanting the woman out of the way.

SECRET SOCIETIES IN THE CAMEROONS

One of the most difficult studies to make in the Cameroons is that of the native secret societies.

This is so because they have been driven underground, so to speak, and because they are secret.

Every tribe has its secret society or its equivalent. They may be ancient or modern. They are usually formed only by men, but some women do have their own similar organization. If a man is an influential "big man" outside of the secret society, he is usually a "big man" in the secret society.

These societies have their good points as well as their bad ones. If a chief is not doing right by his people, the secret society may step in and control him, or do away with him. Many times they serve as a social control for good. Their procedure is usually not tolerated by the missionary or by the government, for the means does not justify the end. Age is important for securing advancement in the society. The older the man is and the more he knows, the more power he controls.

Many tribes initiate their young men into the full status of the tribe within the secret society. Here they are taught many things about life such as knowledge of the tribe, its tradition, folklore, dances, games, customs, sex training, obedience to elders, crafts, techniques, and endurance. The initiates make sacrifice to the ancestors, receive a new name, and so achieve an adult standing in the tribe. After their initiation, they are allowed to marry.

The initiation of the boys and girls depends on their maturity. The rites are often associated with circumcision and cutting of the tribal marks on the body.

Some authorities classify secret societies in four general groups: (1) those based on age and sex affinities, (2) those connected with initiation, (3) those concerned with political aims and significance, and (4) those based on economic differentiation and fees.

FOURTEEN POINTS DESCRIPTIVE OF AFRICAN ANIMISTS

1. The natives of the Cameroons believe in a power or powers on which they depend.

2. They believe that it is possible to communicate with these powers or spirits.

3. They believe that everything in the world has a spirit which makes it what it is and enables it to do what it does—whether animals, trees, inanimate objects or men.

4. They believe that their own personality extends in their secretions, nails and hair, intimate possessions, name or shadow.

5. They believe that their personality is separable from its tabernacle—whether for good or bad.

6. They believe that the attitude of the spirits can be changed.

7. They believe that the powers worshiped are those of nature and that they are not consistent.

8. There is usually a large percentage of magic in their religion.

9. Their religion deals mainly with the material things of life.

10. The dance is very important in their religion.

11. There is usually some sort of influential "big man" connected with religion—medicine man, witch doctor, or priest, who is set apart for the control of the spirit or spirits.

12. They believe that the spirit can enter into some natural thing which we call "fetish".

13. Secret societies have some religious significance and the sexes are usually separated.

14. Most of the people have special initiation rites through which young boys and girls must pass before they can become full members of the

tribe. These exercises usually have definite religious significance.

In observing the African we have come to the conclusion that all is not "black". There are definite values here upon which we can work; a star twinkling in the midst of much darkness. We thank God that he did not leave himself without a witness among the pagans of Africa. God has spoken through Paul in Romans 2:14-15, "For when Gentiles that have not the law do by nature the things of the law, these, not having the law, are the law unto themselves; in that they show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness therewith, and their thoughts one with another accusing or else excusing them". And in Acts 10:34-35 Peter says, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him."

We would be doing the African more harm than good if we robbed him of his spiritual outlook. Everything in the physical world is given a spiritual interpretation. To the African everything is related to some spirit. He cannot understand action or object unless he knows the spirit which is its power within. If we told him all his beliefs were false, we would be robbing him of this spiritual outlook on life, which needs a new interpretation, but which dare not be destroyed.

Also, he has good lessons which we may learn to advantage. The African takes time for living. No cars, trains, or airplanes bother his easy-going life. At first, we were impatient but we are beginning to appreciate this attitude of life. He takes time to sit down, to talk at great length with friends, to tell stories around the village fires at night, or perhaps to sit for hours just meditating. In the United States we learn to schedule our time and not to waste a minute. We have missed some-

thing in our streamlined efficiency. We may also learn from those whom we have come to teach.

The people of Africa need your prayers. The Christians of the Cameroons need your daily supplication. It has been our aim in these pages to provide some information which may lead you to a more intelligent prayer life for the African, bound by fear and destined by witchcraft and magic.

What you read here cannot even be called an introduction to this vast and fascinating subject. Innumerable volumes are available for your further study. The more you read, the more ardent your prayers will become in behalf of these, our brothers in Christ.



QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What is meant by "animism" as the religion of the African natives?
2. How strong is the power of fear in the life of people in the Cameroons?
3. What are some of the practices of the witch doctor in the Cameroons?
4. How do the African natives make use of charms?
5. What are some of the native secret societies in the Cameroons and what are their good as well as bad characteristics?
6. How does the Christian missionary work in presenting the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the African native?

CHAPTER SEVEN

Missionary Strategy in the Cameroons

By Missionaries Paul and Clara Gebauer

Your West African Mission's interests and influences are located in the British Cameroons. This sphere of your interests is divided, at present, into seven mission fields.

In the past we gave these mission fields various names, such as Kakaland, Mambila, Nsungli Field, Bekom Area and Coastal Fields. To avoid confusion we have now agreed to name each field after the place of its mission station. This chapter attempts to introduce you to the following fields: Soppo, Victoria, Belo, Ndu, Mbem, Warwar, Bamenda.

Why this division into mission fields? It is a very natural development, as natural as the variety of mission fields mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles. In our own case, these divisions are based on historical developments, topographical or ethnological lines, political changes and, the most natural of all barriers, namely, linguistic bounds.

The organization of each of your seven fields follows a definite and uniform pattern. This pattern has its foundations in New Testament principles. In reporting to you about the fields, we shall follow this time-tested and time-worn pattern, which begins with the mission station, followed by the station personnel, the field organization and the field personnel.

THE SETUP OF A MISSION STATION

Let us discuss, in general, the setup of a mission station. It is, first of all, a modern necessity. Paul, the Apostle, knew nothing of such a thing as a modern mission station. It is a development of the modern missionary movement and a necessity to meet certain demands of colonial government.

The roving days of Paul, the missionary, are over. Although there slumbers or roars a little Saint Paul in every one of your missionaries, nevertheless, we of this century must have a definite place of abode to please the tax collector and political interests. We cannot just move in and move on like the patriarchs of the Old Testament, though some of us would love it. A station is a "must" in this "orderly" century. On the station many missionaries are limited to building activities, maintenance duties, labor troubles and desk work. It is "necessary" as the center of management and as the hub of training programs.

As a center of management, the mission station is important. It is more than the home of the missionaries. It can be likened to a citadel out of which your modern apostles walk or speed in cars after well-laid plans of attack. Within the privacy of a station, if there is such a thing as privacy in Africa, your missionaries meet for conference, plan, count the cost and account for it.

You see we have more than one person who demands an account of our stewardship. There is the general mission secretary with his necessary demands for facts and figures. There is the promotional secretary who asks for articles and more of them. There is your Woman's Missionary Union, wishing to know how we invest your gifts. There is the comptroller, rightly asking for financial reports. The British Government is also after all of us with forms to be filled out and reports to be made. We must count the number of coughs in each village and know the saints and sinners in every school class. Add the field superintendent with his many activities and you will understand that we need a center of management for each field. We must keep files, records, statistics and we must have typewriters and duplicators to face this age of red tape.

The Missionary-in-Charge is responsible for all the activities of his American and African per-

sonnel. He presides in the weekly or monthly station conferences. He is station treasurer, builder, contractor, judge, general repair man, teacher, preacher, carpenter, mechanic, farmer, gardener, bookkeeper and accountant. No wonder that he needs your special prayers.

The mission station, secondly, is the center of our training programs. We have an extensive school system that must be geared to the demands of an educational code. It is of vital importance to have a real share in the training of African youth. One missionary is set aside in each station to act as Manager-of-Schools. This manager gives the best of her years to the training and supervision of the African teachers of our schools. She visits the outschools (or feeder schools) and plans curricula. She hires and fires; she encourages and scolds. She is the victim of a red tape that demands frequent reports to the government. She runs the station bookshop or it runs her. And besides her own activities are the separate training programs for church workers conducted by the missionary in charge, and the classes conducted by other missionaries for youth and womanhood.

The mission station is, thirdly, the center of our medical activities. We have a registered nurse in each station. Her parish consists of huts that serve as dispensary, maternity ward and patients' quarters. She is busy from morning till night and often through the night. To escape the daily stream of sick ones, she takes to the road once a month to visit churches and schools of the field, to inspect sanitary measures, to treat the sick and to take statistics. Sandwiched in between station and field activities, she trains helpers and teaches hygiene.

The threefold task of a typical mission station explains the ideal personnel setup which we seek for every station. The missionary in charge, or Station Manager, leads, presides and has the gen-

eral responsibility of the station and its attached mission field. His wife helps him in the manifold tasks by being his secretary and by taking over the special work among youth and women. The missionary-teacher shoulders the delicate job of managing all of the schools of a given field. The missionary-nurse runs and is run by the care for the sick and the welfare of station and field. The tasks of the nurse go beyond dispensary and maternity work into the fields of hygiene and sanitation.

Each field has been divided into "church areas". Such an area consists of a number of churches congregating around a centrally located church. A school is usually attached to the center.

Each church has its native church-teacher, a man trained in our school system and under missionaries. We are now at work building up a staff of church teachers trained at our Belo Bible School. Within three years we hope to achieve the impossible of meeting the needs of expanding areas with better trained church teachers.

An evangelist rules over each church area. He usually is a man of years of service who has gained maturity, wisdom and experience to serve as the overseer of his church teachers. He visits them, checks up on their progress, work and records. It is this evangelist who examines candidates for baptism and administers baptism and the Lord's Supper. He is in closest contact with his missionaries, giving them monthly reports.

SOPPO FIELD NEAR THE COAST

It is right that Carl Jacob Bender has his resting place beside Soppo church. He built it and he built more than just one church. He made Soppo Station his life-work and extended its influence down to the glittering waters at sea-level. He walked through many years to seek and to gather in the peoples beyond the large mountain that frames in this mission station. He added years of

God's eternal grace to the history of declining tribes. His name and the name of his wife remain a part of this Africa as long as mortal tongues proclaim the redeeming love of God.

Originally Soppo was planned as a mountain retreat for the missionaries of the equatorial lowlands. This thought of fifty years ago has not lost its wisdom. Soppo is a wonderful and healthful spot. The Benders helped make it that way. They hacked trails out of a tropical forest and helped clear the jungle. They planted trees and roses in a wilderness. They made a home out of Soppo House, an affair of Oregon pine and German architecture. Designed like a cigarbox with four pigeon holes on each of its two long sides, the Benders added improvements until it looked like a home. Every missionary since then has added his own touch and taste, making Soppo House a concrete example of the changing years.

The Benders went beyond material achievements. They attacked the sins of Soppo Village and founded a Baptist church. They went beyond this one village to start churches in every direction. Whatever we of today enjoy and boast about has been built upon the honest foundation laid by the Benders.

Soppo mission was not and is not a beginning in an untouched land. Eighteen miles south is Victoria, where Alfred Saker started pioneering in 1856. All around Soppo is ancient battleground of missions and missionaries. To bring about a beginning in such an environment demanded faith and hard work. To follow up such a type of missionary endeavor required youthful enthusiasm and a close walk with God. Of your seven fields Soppo demands your best missionaries to wear them out the fastest.

Strange to say, this ancient field has not produced the African leadership which one would expect. Pastor Laban Moki was a mighty man, but

remained and died among his own. Pastor Oscar Embola, now at Bender Memorial Church, is in need of a "second touch" to become the witness he could be. Daniel Efite never went beyond Pastor Daniel Efite. Pastor Franz Meende has not recovered from his much wisdom. Etimbe Ngale, the evangelist, is the bright hope among the old guard of workers. Thanks to Etimbe, you may soon hear about a new field with a new station for a much neglected corner of Soppo field.

THE VICTORIA FIELD IN A GREAT CITY

Your parents heard and read much about Victoria, the Baptist church by the seashore. Ninety years ago Alfred Saker made this beautiful cove on the Atlantic a haven for all who were persecuted for righteousness' sake. Saker's colony grew into the only Baptist Republic known. In the political turmoil of the 1880's the Baptist Missionary Society of London sold its Victoria properties and interests to Basel Mission. But the Baptist Missionary Society could not sell the African Baptists. They walked out on Basel Mission to stand on their own feet. Their history has had its ups and downs. During one of the "downs" Trenton church sent August Steffens to guide the Baptist group. Mrs. Steffens taught at Victoria. The Benders helped. During the years after the First World War the Victoria Baptist Church became the finest missionary. Almost all of our fields in the interior had their start in the preaching of evangelists dispatched by Victoria church.

This old church is "down" again. Once more your Mission steps in to assist a new generation to interpret God's will to this disintegrating Africa. Strangers from the hinterlands have pushed to the sea. A quiet migration takes over the lands of declining aborigines. Strong Baptist churches are needed to meet this incoming tide of strangers. Here is work in the slums, among the outcast of society, among African youth caught between the

old and the new, between tottering Africa and the declining West. Victoria Field sees a new day in its most historic corner. What a strange challenge!

BELO FIELD IN THE BEKOM AREA

In a land of overpowering mountains and among a stubborn people some African Baptists began in 1923 to proclaim the joy which they had found in Christ Jesus. These men had been at the coast during the years of war. There they had come in touch with Baptist churches. There Jesus found and touched them. With this eternal experience in their hearts they returned home.

The going was tough for these preachers of a new Gospel. Paganism arrayed itself against them. Roman priests schemed against them. Their countrymen laughed at the strange message. They were beaten and stoned, made homeless and imprisoned, cursed and exiled but they returned and returned again to speak of God's redeeming love.

German Baptist missionaries heard of these martyrs, visited them, and—handed them over to a Protestant mission that claimed these lands as its sphere of influence. But these Africans refused to accept the deal between society and society. They remained Baptists and they remained alone until Adolf Orthner heard about their existence.

With his uncanny sense for sound investments he decided to help and to stay and to build a mission station among them. He did this against the orders of his superiors. He did it with the sincerest wishes of some of his fellow-missionaries for an early disaster. Orthner dug in at Wombong, right among his faithful Baptists. He gathered them, took their cause to chiefs and government until an acceptable security was guaranteed. And Missionary Orthner got a beautiful hill for his future station: Belo.

This Belo mission was not much to look at in 1932. I remember a stormy afternoon when Orthner

and I sat on the roofs of our respective huts to hold down the thatch that was playing with a tornado. We had few comforts but we had fun and work and hopes. Out of these hopes came a strong church and the Belo field of today. It boasts sturdy and very independent churches, stubborn leaders, some of our finest evangelists, new opportunities and a future even brighter than its past.

The last war retarded the growth of Belo station. But we have acquired the best acres of the hill to build in these years. It will become your most picturesque station. Placed upon a hill that once formed the core of a huge crater, it has the eternal hills for a backdrop. To right and left roars the symphony of waterfalls and mountain streams. And in this setting are the valleys of maize and plantains, of guinea corn and Irish potatoes. Farmers and traders are the people round about Belo. They raise good crops and hungry dogs, scrawny chickens and lively goats. Their most ancient crop is cola nuts. These nuts of a beautiful color and bitter taste made them the traders they are today. They make Jacob blush. They carry cola nuts to the edges of the desert and they return with native cloth and onions in exchange. So they do while young and in search of dowry wealth. Married, they settle down to less stormy years. They have worked their fourteen years and more for Rachel. The late Samma Nji, their great evangelist, sang his Gospel message into their stormy hearts and won a hardened people for the Gospel story of old.

Among the Babanki, Johannes Tonto arose as a prophet. Jesus found him far from his land in the peanut market near Soppo Mission. With his Savior he returned to his people of the interior. For years he was the only one attending his services. For years his drum called in vain. For years he was the joke of his countrymen and his wife. For years he was made homeless. Wandering from hut to hut and compound to compound he kept returning. And his Christ won. Today we have

five churches in Tonto's homeland. Good teachers have come from his people of artists. Today the Babanki Baptists reach out beyond their confines to win others for Christ.

Daniel Hangu arose among his Bagola tribe to preach salvation. Stubborn, strong and determined, he stood his ground against all opponents. The old chief cursed him a thousand times but Hangu stayed on. Chapels were burned, visiting missionaries told to get out but the cause of Christ took root and has grown. In a land of heat and hatred New Testament churches thrive.

In the mountains of Oku transforming wonders take place. Orthner could not pry open this closed door. I was literally kicked out. Your Africans could not make it against an old rascal of a chief. Today a Baptist school sits in the heart of the land. Ancient sacrifices lose their power. Oku is open to the gospel.

From Belo field came Robert Jam who helped open Kaka and Mambila. Abraham Nge, now an evangelist on Mbem Field, is a son of Belo church. Thomas To, an evangelist of exceptional qualities and a veteran in Christ, has his roots in Belo field. From Wombong church came Noa Ndimbu, the evangelist. From Bangolan stems Lukas Ndi who now serves Victoria Baptist Church as an evangelist.

The one and only Bible School of your West African Mission is located at Belo. It is a small affair at present. It will grow into a giant, we believe. From it will come the trained workers to meet the needs of this generation of Africans. You will hear much about this school.

This child among your mission fields has grown slowly, stubbornly, without much noise to give us dependable leaders for all of your fields. Baptists of deepest conviction started this work and Baptists of the finest type are found here to this day.

Persecution and hard times help to a faith that matches the heartaches of our Africa of the twentieth century.



QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What is the setup of a typical mission field in the Cameroons of Africa?
2. What is the threefold task of a typical mission station in the Cameroons?
3. What are some of the outstanding features of the Soppo and Victoria mission fields near the coast?
4. What have been some of the lasting accomplishments of the Rev. Carl J. Bender, missionary of years ago?
5. Why can we speak with thanksgiving of Christian martyrs among the natives of the Belo mission field?
6. Can you mention some of the Christian natives who have come from the Belo mission field?

CHAPTER EIGHT

Christ at the African Crossroad

By Missionaries Paul and Clara Gebauer

Think of tall grass swaying in the winds, of cows grazing on a thousand hillsides, of north winds howling through dark nights, and you have an idea of Nsungli Plateau. On this plateau lies the Ndu mission field. At the windiest height of the plateau we have our mission station. Ndu station can be fogbound for weeks during the rainy season, and it has the loveliest clouds and sunshine once the rains are over. In the dry months the sands from the Sahara do blot out the view of distant mountains and the days can become hot and dry. And as the weather upon this plateau of extremes, so are its people.

Again, it was Missionary Orthner who sensed the possibilities of the weather-beaten plateau. He made the first contacts with the chiefs and he had much to do with the present station site. It is not an ideal spot, but the best bargain we could obtain.

NDU FIELD IN THE NSUNGLI AREA

Beginnings at Ndu were not ideal. Fire swept away the first home of the missionaries. It happened under circumstances that were not encouraging to us. To the population the fire had such an importance that to this day the people divide events as before or after "the fire". The chiefs were against us. Public sentiment did not favor continuation of our work. Three Christians clung to us as the only encouragement in dreary months. We rebuilt in 1933. During 1934 Adolf Orthner added a permanent home of sun-baked bricks and zinc roof to the growing station. While this was written, we were awaiting consent of the government to add 20 acres to the old plot in order that we might build permanent quarters, schools and

provide the nurse with facilities worthy of her training. We expanded rapidly after years of slow growth.

Ndu school is the bright spot in this field. It has grown consistently. When one British officer returned to the plateau after ten years of absence, he declared Ndu Baptist School the one and only sign of progress he had met on his tour of inspection.

Ndu Church, the mother church of so many little churches, has had years of stagnation. The year 1947 marked the first steps forward in many years. But many of the offspring of Ndu church have done better than the mother. That is good. The Christian leaders of this field have come from the forgotten corners of the field such as Dumbo and Bum, Nkoll and Din. The boys from the farms have come in and have taken over.

On this field you meet the most unique African saint, Evangelist Mamadu. To look at him is a definite disappointment. To many a missionary he has been a permanent headache. Tall, awkward, stubborn to the point of impertinence, he has been a question mark to many. "Is that Mamadu?" one of your missionaries asked when she first saw him. It is! He is the man who covered every tribe of every inland field long before any missionary dared to enter.

Mamadu and his friend, a little fellow of no outward signs of power, began in 1921 on their own account. They had met Jesus at the coast and with him they went to the lands that had never heard. They literally sang their way out of dangers. They leveled the ground for missions and missionaries who followed up their trails in 1928 and 1929. The glory of having brought the Gospel to tribes unknown belongs to Mamadu, an African of Africans.

This pioneering spirit is not lost. Just now an African evangelist is making his way into an area

that has shown no sign of weakening in the past twenty years. This area resents progress and intrusion. No dent had been made by visiting missionaries and their schools. Now the African rises and says: "Let us try again!" I believe the African evangelist will succeed.

Fifteen years ago I spent a month at the weakest church on the outskirts of this field. To have two or three natives at prayer meeting was the average. To have ten at a Sunday service was a victory. Out of this dying corner came one wide-awake boy. He will become the youngest and brightest evangelist of Ndu field before this goes to press. Hope never faileth!

THE MBEM FIELD WITH MISSION OPPORTUNITIES

This is your field if you like variety. It has lowlands with heat and wild game, with swamps and crocodiles, and it has its heights that are unfriendly and barren. The steepest trails are on this field and so are the low-level roads that are water-bound half of the year. Mbem has the tall, slim Tikari people and the little folk that crept out of tropical forests. We have the light-skinned Bororo of our features and the Mbem groups who hold the record for blackness. In the south, men do the farming; in the north, they would be arrested for doing so. Marriage is thought of lightly in one section and well regulated in the other. In one group the mother-in-law rules supreme, while she does not count in others. Variety excels.

This is the field of missionary opportunity. It has many languages and dialects. It holds the remnants of groups that broke away from larger groups by feud and force. Until we came, there was no exchange of goods or ideas worth mentioning. Each group lived its secluded life in its secluded valley. One group was suspicious of the next. Some clans never farmed, depending cheerfully on the annual raid staged on the farms of the

next valley. Among these fugitives from kith and kin—and justice, one common bond existed, namely, fear. Some groups had just returned from sixty years in slavery. Others had kept freedom by staying in the caves of the hills. To chance upon such a collection of humanity with the unifying power of God's love is opportunity, indeed.

This is the field of missionary strategy. Your first missionaries—the Gebauers—settled in 1935. Following the principles of Paul of old, they first occupied the centers of importance, such as the places of dominant leaders, of famous doctors and of ancient shrines of worship. This was followed by occupation of the few crossroads for the Gospel message the trickle of commerce passing east and west. Thirdly, we occupied all the approaches to this unique land to control or keep out undesirable interests. Later, we became anxious to build chapels next to the market places that sprang up after our coming. Finally, we concentrated on the neglected settlements to make complete the coverage of lands not reached before within five years. It was done.

This is the field where Africans have worked for Africans. With our coming to Mbem in 1935 we brought along or had follow us church teachers from Belo field. At our request the Belo Church delegated Robert Jam, Noa Ndimbu, Abraham Nge and Yerehia Yah to assist in bringing the Gospel to a long-neglected people. The church at Tungo gave us Johannes Tonto. Bangolan Church sent Daniel Hangu. These men of the cross left homes and kin to face an unknown people and future. They did it cheerfully and successfully. Robert Jam became the apostle of Mfumte area. The central area became the prey of Johannes Tonto, a man of faith and consistency. Abraham Nge now serves as evangelist over our most hopeful Baptist land.

This is the field of continuous expansion. We began with 2½ Baptists at the close of 1935. With

these few Christians we organized the first church. No statistics can fully cover the years of walking, of praying, of suffering, of losses, of setbacks. How can one measure a mother's loss of two babies to a strange people and a cause unknown? Tonto's wife lost two babies and fled. How can we gauge the homelessness and privations? We count them for naught who now see Mfumte Valley with its booming churches and schools. And the end is not in sight.

This is the field of missionary devotion. Nurse Edith Koppin from the paved streets of Detroit came into this land of hills. She served nobly for many years. Nurse Laura Reddig came from the grain pits of North Dakota to help in this land of altitudes. Do you know her? Did she ever burden you with her burden, the sick and the lost of these lands? She has burned her candle at both ends since her coming. Through the years of war she held the fort. She is holding it to this day against the devil and high water. It shortens her years. But this task is worth a life and more than one!

This is the field of high hopes. We have reached every village and every hut, but we have not touched every soul. We have covered this land with chapels. Each morning hears songs of praise rise to the Almighty God and no night comes ahead of evening prayers. But we have yet to reach the last lost man.

WARWAR FIELD IN MAMBILA PROVINCE

At Warwar we are coming to the ideal mission field: one people, one language with a pleasant variety of dialects, one type of highland, one system of government, one lingua franca, and one solid and unmistakable opposition. No motor road leads into this field. One could be built, coming in from the north, but commerce sees no gains in crossing thinly populated areas for the sake of one forgotten group. A road from the south would demand well-built bridges and passes, and they

cost money. Mambila land offers no adequate returns for the financial outlay. There will be no motor road for years to come. That makes Mambila field so much more the dream of the normal missionary. Untouched by any other missionary effort, except for the inroads of Islam, it is the dream come true.

This mission field offers the most solid opportunity to test to the utmost the power of the Gospel of our Lord. The people of this wind-beaten highland, called the Mambila by their enemies, are a friendly lot. They have had seventy years of Mohammedan lordship and would welcome a change. They are ready for the revolution that comes with the Lordship of Jesus. They need this upsetting experience. Though tall of stature, brave on the hunt, good in health, and perfect specimens of humanity, they are filled with fear and their days are controlled by customs that will not stand the changes which this century brings upon them. These years of political strife will tear them apart into groups. Their tribal gods and beliefs cannot stand up against the western tide of materialism and individualism. Islam does not help them, and they know it. Western protection will not solve their deep problems and they sense it. We hold the answer. It is our opportunity.

We have known this open door since 1929. Evangelist Mamadu first toured among the Mambilas. Adolf Orthner followed up his trail and reported favorably. Pastor Benjamin Schlipf edited excellent propaganda material for Mambila as early as 1930. In 1936 the Gebauers toured Mambila land extensively to find the approach to government and population. We applied for a station site the same year. During the first month of 1938 we were allowed to mark off the acres desired. In March of the same year you sent George and Louise Dunger of New York City to take over this opened door. In January of 1939 the Dungers entered Mambila officially to build their home in the

wilderness. They were followed by Nurse Koppin to take up medical services.

What have we, out here, done with this open door? Only a little if we consider the lapse of years. The Dungers did their best in the span of time given them. A home for the nurse and her work were built. A chapel arose. Huts for the staff came into existence. Roads came to be; trees were planted; gardens laid out. We have at Warwar the most perfect layout of all stations. The years of war stopped the progress.

The Ahrens attempted to carry on, when they did have time for this far-off field. Earl Ahrens built a home of stone walls and with grass roof because years and termites had done away with the quarters of 1939.

The one person who did the most to hold together this difficult work was Evangelist Robert Jam. There is nothing "like jam" about this preacher from Nkom. He often stood alone against the tide of unrest and opposition. He did well. He held together the scattered groups of believers. Robert even planned for the years to come. He is the typical African who drives a good bargain, who discovers the enemy fast and goes after him. Stubbornly he attacks Satan—and the missionary, if the latter is wrong. Such an African fellow-worker is valuable. God ordered this unique saint from Nkom to hold this long neglected outpost.

We are now talking of this field as the "mission field of beginning again". The coming of the Schneiders in 1947 marked the new start. The two Oregonians have done well. They are making a home out of Earl Ahrens' stone walls. They are rebuilding staff quarters. They have turned eight acres of fallow land into a model farm to help their African friends to food—a problem in this fertile land. Missionary Schneider does more. He is now lugging prize pigs over the hills to start the bacon industry for his meat-hungry people. He

runs the beginning of a livestock farm. We consider his unique gifts as from heaven for this field. Mildred Schneider revives the medical service. Both of them trek and trek to find openings for their God and his work. Pray for this land of a new beginning.

BAMENDA AT THE CROSSROADS

We are closing with "the baby" among your six mission fields. Only recently we erected a decent chapel building. It has no school, no evangelist and no preaching place but one. This baby sits squarely between a Catholic mission of powerful influence and the network of Basel mission stations. Every expert predicts an early death for the baby. That is hopeful. It will live.

The Gebauers started at Bamenda on January 15, 1947. The government granted us an ideal hill, dominating the crossroads of the province. We began building a permanent kitchen. We have now completed a home. Those who helped us carry stones, dig ditches, make roads and put up walls and roofs were men from the Mbem field. Strange to say, many of them had huts back of the mission hill before we settled there. These men, away from home, started the Bamenda Baptist Church. Among these men of a new work are native Baptists from the Mbem field. They have assumed the lead.

We helped them to a church teacher. With him they meet for daily prayers, out-of-doors for their Sunday meetings and during the rains they crawl in between planks, zincs and tools under a grass-roofed storehouse. The Christians among this group brought in their unconverted neighbors. They gathered in men and women who had been in contact with Baptist churches. Our first baptism saw thirteen converts step into the waters, among them a leper. Our second baptism brought the membership of Bamenda Church to fifty-three.

Gift (5)

Among these fifty-three we now have three who work on a certain farm away from Bamenda. They have now built their own chapel in their settlement. They will have their own church teacher before long. This is normal growth. It is the only way of bringing into being indigenous churches.

Bamenda station was planned to be headquarters of your West African Mission. Bamenda, being located about halfway between the two extreme stations of Soppo and Warwar, is the logical spot for it. But it is in the very nature of our calling and conviction that we must witness, that we must see others accept the way of Christ and that we see churches come into existence. We cannot sit at the crossroad of nations and let thousands pass by unnoticed. The love of Christ constrains us to bring them in touch with the Christ of the Cameroons.



QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Where is Ndu located and what has helped to make this an important mission field?
2. Why do we speak of Mbem as the mission field of great opportunity and high hopes?
3. What have been the difficulties in opening the door into the Warwar mission field?
4. Why is Bamenda called the village at the crossroads and "the baby" among our seven mission fields?
5. Can you place five of our missionaries upon the fields where they are now stationed?
6. What has been the nature of our missionary advance in the Cameroons since the days of August Steffens and Carl Bender?

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